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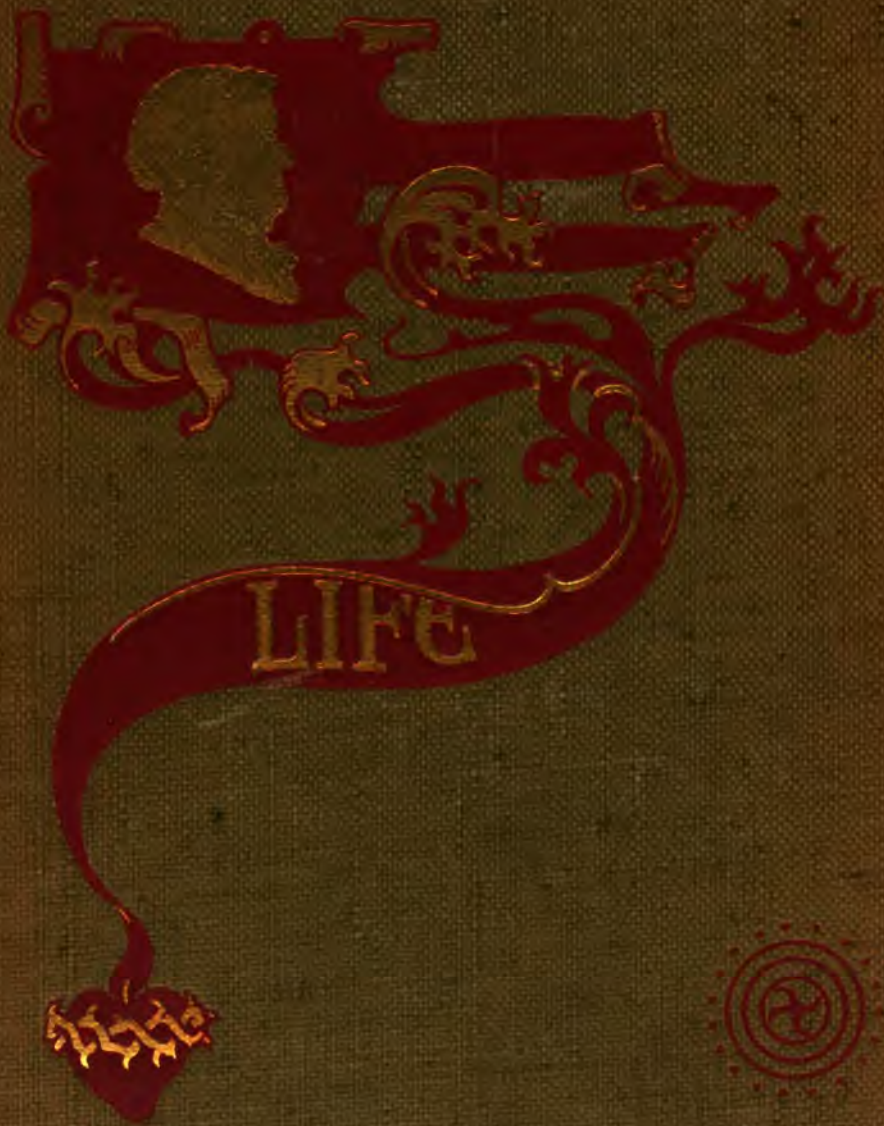
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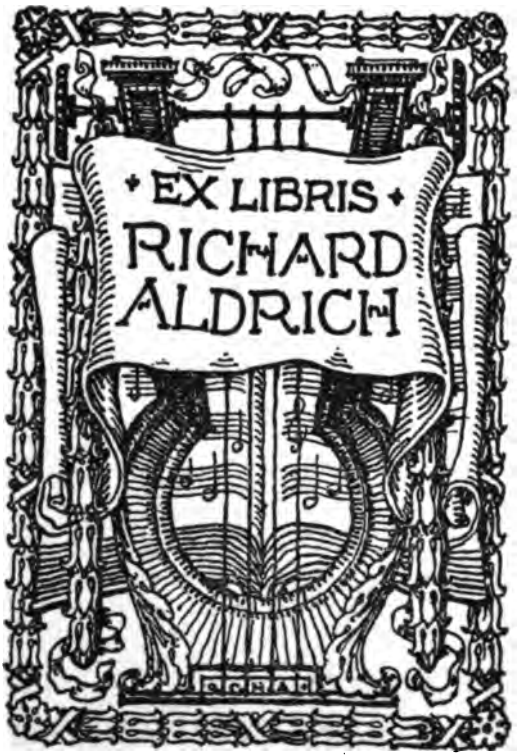

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PREFACE.

PREFACES seem to be falling into general dislike in England. At times, however, they are necessary evils. I will endeavour to make the present ill as brief as possible.

There is absolutely no need to dwell upon the lack of a full and authoritative English "Life of Wagner," for—*pace* Mr H. T. Finck's two entertaining volumes—the thing has never yet been seriously attempted. The same might be said with regard to every country, save for *one* exception: even in Germany, the Bayreuth master's native land, there exists but one biography of him that aspires to the completeness of a standard work; it naturally has both fed and swallowed up the rest. That biography is the incomparable work of Carl Fr. Glasenapp. Originally published in 1876, for the opening of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, in 1882 (the year of *Parsifal*) it was brought down to date by a second edition with a supplemental section; then came a pause. Richard Wagner died in 1883, and it might have been thought advisable for Herr Glasenapp to hasten forward yet a third edition, with a second supplement; but he felt, and rightly, that no further edition ought to be issued before time, research and meditation should have enriched his work with riper thought and a far larger body of material. Meanwhile appeared the shorter monographs of Wilhelm Tappert and Richard Pohl; supplying valuable information in many respects, however, they made no pretension to that monumental character Herr Glasenapp had prefigured as his own ideal. At last in 1894 the first volume of his third edition saw the light; containing in itself almost as much matter as both the volumes of its predecessor (1882), it was practically a new

production. The German preface to that volume, acknowledging indebtedness to right and left (an indebtedness really quite insignificant in comparison with the author's own rich stores and private sources of information), foreshadowed the work's completion in *two* additional instalments. Two further volumes have since, in fact, appeared, taking us to the Spring of 1864 (when Richard Wagner was summoned to Munich). A fourth, to conclude the Life, is not as yet to hand; but by the time I have caught Herr Glasenapp up, I have every confidence that, despite the smallness of his leisure for literary pursuits, he will not have kept us waiting.

Having managed to introduce myself into the question, I had better proceed at once to make a clean breast of it, and confess that this is not a *literal* translation of Herr Glasenapp's work. After commencing the task of transference to our own vernacular, I felt that I should do the author far more justice by allowing myself a change of phrase or sequence here and there; that a paragraph might be slightly re-arranged upon occasion, a footnote lifted into the text, or even omitted, a comment varied for the English reader, and so on. Not that anything of a material nature would suffer change, but merely that the shade of difference in the spirit of two allied languages, and their literature, should be taken into consideration. Were I to call the plan which I deemed requisite—and have adopted—a "free translation," I should be conveying a false impression; for page after page is in strict accordance with the German original. "An English revision" would be nearer the mark, and express the fact that in all essentials I have closely followed Herr Glasenapp's text, but from time to time I have made a little verbal or constructional alteration. To this, I may add, I have Herr Glasenapp's full and free consent.

As to the present volume: Objection may be taken, in some captious quarters, to the devotion of so much space to Richard Wagner's ancestors and other relations. It must be remembered, however, that in the case of any

notable phenomenon scientific inquiry positively demands some knowledge of the antecedent conditions; individual biology is sterile unless it can trace, however imperfectly, the germs bequeathed to the scion by his stock. Then again, the life of boy and youth is far more largely represented by impressions received, than by actions done; the influence of the family surroundings forms an important factor in future evolution. And when we come to the doings of the hero's brothers and sisters (in all but one instance, his seniors), we have both lines of interest converging: on the one hand they distinctly shew what must necessarily have been reflected upon the juvenile mind, on the other they help to account through consanguinity for the bent of his own nature—in this case most strikingly, as almost every one of Richard's father's children except himself became an actor, or what is still more to the purpose, a singing actor.

This volume brings our story down to 1843, an important era in Richard Wagner's life, with his entry, as composer of two successful operas, upon a so-called "practical" career at one of the principal German theatres. How he fared there, how he turned his back on Dresden and all office-bearing, and how he planned and actually commenced his great artistic reformation, will form the subject of Volume II. (to appear, as I hope, in 1901). Volume III. will follow his changing fortunes, through the last two-thirds of his exile, down to his rescue by King Ludwig. This, I trust, will be ready in 1902; whilst, subject to Herr Glasenapp's state of forwardness, I expect to complete the Life by a fourth volume in 1903.

As I fancy I heard the bell ring, Ladies and Gentlemen, I withdraw to let the curtain rise.

WM. ASHTON ELLIS.

Horsted Keynes,
August 1900.

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PRÆNATALIA.

(1769-1813.)

However lofty a figure be, it never stands entirely detached from its surroundings; in some one thing each German is akin to his great Masters, and this something—by the German's very nature—is capable of great, and therefore needs a slow, development.

RICHARD WAGNER.

INTRODUCTORY.

With Bach the German Spirit was born anew, from out the inmost mysteries of Music. When Goethe's "Goetz" appeared, the joyful cry went up, "That's German!"

RICHARD WAGNER.

WRITING from Berlin in 1750, Voltaire might well say: "I am living here in France; one knows no other tongue than ours. German is for none but the horses and soldiers."

These insolent words of the emissary of French civilisation throw a lurid light on the state of German culture at the time. In the lethargy of profound exhaustion the nation had been all but robbed of its last possession, its native tongue. Latin was the scholar's language, Italian the singer's and musician's, French the noble's and courtier's; the conversation of the burgher world was tricked with French fal-dals; the mother-tongue fled scared away to nook and corner, field and hamlet, within the workshop and behind the plough. And just as this extirpation of the German name and nature seemed sealed for good, Sebastian Bach, the Leipzig Cantor, forgotten, lonely and weighed down by life's sore trials, forever closed his weary eyes against the poverty and want in which he left his loved ones. Of him says Wagner, that he represents "the history of the German Spirit's inmost life during the cruel century of the German folk's complete extinction."

To such a hidden refuge was consigned that remnant of the German Spirit which lingered on despite the bloody wars of creeds. In deep enfeeblement, both inner and outer, the German had acquired the fatal virtue of *endurance*. He had learned to trim himself to the unworthy thing, to face oppression with the passiveness of dogged patience. Confronted with the braggart splendour of his Princes' courts, and their selfish policy that spread such boundless misery throughout the land, he still

preserved undying confidence in his "beloved and honoured rulers," even when they sold their subjects to the foreign foe.

But already on the Prussian throne there sat the man with great grey eyes of fire, whose cane was soon to teach all Europe to respect. On the battlefield of Rossbach the friend and pupil of French culture, the patron of French taste in literature, first shewed the world again the German's strength. "The first true gust of higher life was brought into German poetry through Frederick the Great and the deeds of the Seven-years War," says Goethe of him; and just as in the "War-songs of a Prussian Grenadier" the German muse addressed herself once more directly to the Folk, however clumsily and scantly, so German sense and German speech began to reassert their sway in the reviving institutions of the Burgher class. "Whereas the folly of high quarters, disowning home for foreign dictates and French influences, fell victim to a ghastly impotence, the educated Burgher world took an active interest in the rewakening of German Literature, enabling it to follow the unmatched upsoaring of the German spirit, the feats of Winckelmann, Lessing, Goethe, and lastly Schiller" (*Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, V. 331).

Thus the reviving "German Spirit" obtained withal the friendly soil wherein to thrust and spread its roots. At the very time when the foreign spirit of Romanic Gaul was celebrating its triumphs over a trampled nationality, a GOETHE was already born, and with that birth the genius of the German Folk acquired a pledge of its renascence: the force deep-buried in the giant Bach was urging grandly outwards. A youthful stress beyond compare, a universal receptivity, were striving to present the whole phenomenal world within the beautifying form of ideal art. On the opposite pole stood BEETHOVEN, who sought indeed the form at bottom of Bach's wonder-mine, but solely to inspire it with an ardent soul, and thus dissolve it from within.

The genius of SCHILLER, keen to ennoble what it found at hand, bent from the open folk's-stage toward the listening comrades of his time, to draw them step by step through his creations from "Don Carlos" to the "Bride of Messina," into his realm of the Ideal. And this was at the German Theatre, that same raw German Folk's-stage which, in the hands of a Gottsched and under the influence of misconstrued French exemplars, had

just presented such a strange distortion. "We see the raw Folk-theatre, entirely neglected by the higher-cultured of the nation, fall into the experimenting hands of beaux esprits in the first half of the eighteenth century; from these it escapes to the well-meaning care of an honest but narrow-minded Burgher world, whose fundamental note becomes its law of Naturalism" (*Prose Works*, V. 185). From the simple naturalism of the Burgher-play to the lofty ideality of the Bayreuth Bühnenfestspiel, leads on the path pursued in the development of German Art. How many were the crossings of this path, how often has its settled trend been made untraceable; how frequently in later days have sapient critics trumpeted its last surrender, at the very time the mightiest artistic genius was holding it with all the unmoved sureness of the magnet.*

Of all to whom was set the grand example of Schiller's efforts to uplift the German Theatre inch by inch, to form a truly German art at once ideal and popular, Karl Maria von WEBER was the only one to follow it with like devotion in the German *Singspiel*.† Nor was he spared from suffering the poet's outward lot; toward both these men the German courts and world of fashion stayed cold and distant, though in every stratum of the Folk itself both found unfailing tokens of a German instinct going out especially to *these* its masters. The heritage of both, the prosecution of their task, was to be taken up in time by RICHARD WAGNER. From the Freischütz to Euryanthe, Weber had gone the same road as Schiller from his Robbers to his Bride of Messina, the road of "idealising the drama": this ideal character was to be given it in the one case by choosing subjects from the realm of history and legend, instead of from domestic life, and finally by summoning the antique *chorus* to form a living breast-work against "naturalism"; in the other, by invoking the magical aid of *music* from the first. After Beethoven's world of Tone, well-nigh unknown to Schiller, had shewn the wondrous power of German Music, the road itself could no longer stay in doubt, though only for the tread of genius. Upon the Bayreuth hill now stands its goal and record.

* Cf. Hans von Wolzogen's "*Die Idealisirung des Theaters*," Leipzig, 1885, C. F. Leede.

† A form of stage-play, with songs, &c., strewn among the dialogue.—W. A. E.

But the journey was long, and, properly to follow it, we must turn for awhile to the heart of that German burgher-life which in the second half of the eighteenth century begins to beat with freer pulse. Kindled by the pioneers of the awaking "German Spirit," there pierces through the mists of apathy a light, a warmth, the like whereof had not been felt for five wan generations. "In some respect each German is akin to his great Masters": in the attempt, however incomplete, to follow up our hero's ancestry, the profound truth of these words of Wagner's may be illustrated by the picture of a family in whose own evolution the national development is mirrored past mistake.

I.

FAMILY HISTORY.

Excise-officer Gottlob Friedrich Wagner and his forefathers—"Urahnherr war der Schönsten hold."—Leipzig after the Seven-Years War.—Friends and descendants of G. F. Wagner.

> *Our new Jewish fellow-citizens may decorate themselves with foreign names as startling as delicious; we poor old burgher and peasant families have to rest content with "Smith," "Miller," "Weaver," "Wainwright," and so forth, for all time.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

ON a September day of 1769 a simple wedding was celebrated in the little parish-church of Schönefeld, near Leipzig. The happy bridegroom bore the name of Gottlob Friedrich Wagner, and filled the post of Receiver of taxes for the Electoral Excise at Leipzig. The blushing bride was Johanna Sophia Eichel, only daughter of Gottlob Friedrich Eichel, the master of a charity-school. A modest event enough, in no way attracting the notice of the contemporary world, or even of fellow-townsmen beyond the immediate circle of acquaintances. But the blessing of the renascent Genius of the German nation was on this union, and filled it with import to remotest times.

The scene of this country wedding, a pleasant spot barely three miles distant from the city and a favourite summer resort for the inhabitants of Leipzig, was gay with all the bravery of autumn tints on field and hedge. Forty-four years later it became distinguished in the War of Liberation, a scene of cruel havoc; just about that time was born our RICHARD WAGNER, a grandson of this bridal pair.

Not till quite recently has any light been thrown on the ancestors and previous history of Gottlob Friedrich Wagner. The family traditions did not go back beyond the grandfather; Richard Wagner's own knowledge here found its limit, and, ever striving

toward the future, his genius had far more serious work to do than hunting up his personal pedigree. "Forget your ancestors," he cried in 1848 to a puffed-up aristocracy, "and we promise to be generous and strike away all memory of *ours*. Reflect that, else, we too must recollect our forefathers; whose deeds—and good deeds too—have not been treasured up in household archives, but whose sufferings, thraldoms and oppressions of all kinds, are written on the great unerring records of the history of the last millennium." So speaks a sterling scion of the German Folk, who feels his blood and spirit one with the free Germanic hero-dom of old, and needs no other patent of nobility. Yet if sturdy manliness makes out the kernel of true heroism, we well may look to meet it in the forbears, sprung mostly from the peasant class, of these "ancestorless" German heroes of the mind. A heroism made strong by toil and hardship, by work and strife; even though that strife at first be nothing beyond the struggle to bring the native soil to fruitful bearing, a rooting out, a clearing, ploughing and sowing. When men begin to group themselves into communities, and distinctive names of families arise, in the very name of "Wagner" we have a hint of the old Aryan, the ur-Germanic occupation of its earliest bearer.* And when the hero of the German Reformation, a son of miner and peasant folk, claims from the nobles of the German nation, the dignitaries of every German city, the teaching of the poor neglected people, the founding of schools and churches in town and country, to German men there opens out a new wide field for struggle and endeavour. However insignificant its out-

* See Hans von Wolzogen's *Urgermanische Spuren*: "As the old Aryan stock begins its wanderings, and history commences to evolve, men build and fit the *wagon*, to carry wife and children, goods and chattels, to a new home beyond the ancient confines. The ox-drawn wain is just as characteristic of the Aryan, as the tent-bearing camel of the Semite. Like our shepherd's cabin, the hut he next erects is but this wandering wagon brought to rest. Whithersoever his journeyings took him from the East, through Russia up to Norway, or downward to the Alps, to this day we find these wagon-huts—set high on stones, in lieu of wheels, to ward him from the torrent's rage. Thus with the first migration of our race appears the art of the '*Wagner*' (wainwright), as the manly art, beside the womanly domestic art of the '*Weber*' (weaver); and it is truly touching to see the earliest handicrafts of our forefathers giving their names to those families whence the Germanest masters of the most German art were later to arise: families of calling, from out the primal family of blood" (*Bayreuther Blätter*, 1887, pp. 267-68).

ward aspect, this struggle is a veritable fight with dragons, housed in the caves of ignorance and superstition. The village Schoolmaster becomes the actual guide and Christian educator of the Folk: a notable and typic figure in seventeenth century Germany, down to its tiniest hamlet; for the most part cantor, organist, nay, sacristan in one, and withal the friend and counsellor of the whole countryside, the link between the populace and culture of his times; nay more, the only prop of "Deutschthum" against the overbearing Romanism of courts and high society.

In this humble educational work the ancestors of Gottlob Friedrich Wagner had shared through many generations; from father to son and grandson we meet them as simple, pious folkschool-teachers in various nooks of Saxony, and mostly, too, as organists and cantors of the parish church. From the same rank sprang great Sebastian Bach, and never left it till his death. "Behold this master dragging on his half-starved life as ill-paid organist and cantor now of this, and now of that Thuringian parish—puny places scarcely known to us by name," says Richard Wagner of him; yet the influence of men like these upon the people's inner life, midst all the nation's outward powerlessness, he shews us in an earlier article:—"Go and listen one winter-night in that little cabin: there sit a father and his three sons, at a small round table; two play the violin, a third the viola, the father the 'cello; what you hear so lovingly played, is a quartet composed by that little man who is beating time. He is the schoolmaster from the neighbouring hamlet, but the quartet he has composed is a lovely work of art and feeling. Again I say, go to that spot, and hear that author's music played, and you will be dissolved to tears; for it will search your heart, and you will know what German Music is, will feel what is the German spirit" (*P. W.* VII. 86-7).*

Our hero's first discoverable progenitor is Samuel Wagner, appointed schoolmaster of Thammenhain near Wurzen in the Leipzig circuit, hard by the present Prussian boundary, but then in the very heart of Saxony. He was born in 1643; but where his cradle stood we cannot definitely say, as the whole preceding quarter of a century had been occupied by the unrest and havoc

* For sake of brevity, quotations from *Richard Wagner's Prose Works* will in future be indicated in the manner above.—W. A. E.

of the Thirty-Years War. Most probably his father, like himself, was a simple folkschool-teacher; but neither register nor archive makes mention of his name or origin. The father's calling seems indicated by the scriptural fore-name of the son, which would hardly have been chosen by burgher or peasant. It remains a special favourite through several generations of the Wagner house; repeatedly we find three Samuels at one time, a father, son, and grandson, or uncle and nephew; and if one dies, the next-born is christened after him.

It is in his twentieth year that we find our Samuel Wagner entering on his duties at Thammenhain,* and by his side his newly-wedded Barbara. His eldest son is Emanuel Wagner, born in August 1664, sire of the stock whose destinies we are about to follow; but the very next son receives the father's Christian name, and succeeds to his post of organist and schoolmaster when death takes the older Samuel, at sixty-three, after more than forty years of tenure. The first-born, Emanuel, also remains faithful to his father's calling. Like him, he early enters office at the neighbouring Colmen (Kulm) near Thalwitz, and at Kühren in 1688 he marries Anna Benewitz, aged eighteen years, daughter of schoolmaster and tax-gatherer Ernst Benewitz. What higher talents he may have possessed, his narrow round of life and duties prevents us from discovering. About 1702, already blest with a little daughter Anna Dorothea, he removes from Colmen to Kühren, the birthplace of his wife, to fill a similarly modest station; at Kühren a year later, the 14th of January 1703, his first male offspring, Samuel Wagner, comes into the world. It would seem that Emanuel was not spared his share of trials; several of his children must have died in infancy; his faithful helpmeet goes before him to the other world in the prime of life, dying at the age of eight-and-forty. He lives to see his eldest daughter married at Kühren to a master-tailor, Joh. Müller of Altenburg, and departs this life in his sixty-second year.

Not long after his father's death we meet with the younger

* The name "Thammenhain" has been interpreted as "Damian's grove"; but in the year 1284 it appears in the form of "Tannenhain," or "Fir-grove," so that our hero's oldest ancestor presents himself as a genuine Tann-häuser. The parish, still fairly flourishing, lies on the Thorgau road, in a hilly and well-wooded country—of pines there is no lack; to the north-east rises the Schildaer Berg, and to the east begins the Sitzeroder Heide.

Samuel Wagner at Müglenz, two leagues north-east of Wurzen, as assistant to the schoolmaster of the place, after having given proof of his powers by singing in church on St. John's day, 1727, "to the satisfaction of the Herr Pastor and assembled congregation"—taking us quite into the first act of *Die Meistersinger*; though the worthy Masters themselves are lacking, the minister and congregation play the rôle of "marker" and prize-adjudgers. His deed of appointment, executed by Administrator, Liege-lord and Justice, Rudolf von Bünau,* has come down to us in the original. In it he is solemnly pledged, as substitute during the life of the "emeritus," and principal after the latter's death, "truly and with all diligence to discharge God's service in the church with song, with lection, prayer and organ-playing; to bring the school-children to a proper fear of God in the orthodox religion, and particularly in the *Catechismo Lutheri* and other Christian teachings and virtues; as also, assiduously to instruct them in singing, reading, writing and arithmetic; and, should plague arise, which God in His mercy forfend, to abide and not forsake his post," etc., etc. The Emeritus having meanwhile been retired on account of age and illness, a second and still more elaborate decree, dated the 14th August of the same year, confirms Samuel Wagner's definite appointment to the rank of Müglenz Schoolmaster with assurance of a full yearly wage "and all other benefits and customary accidencies enjoyed by his antecessors."

Barely half a year later, on the 10th of February 1728, he brings a wife to his Müglenz schoolhouse, Anna Sophia the orphan daughter of Master Christoph Rössig, late tenant of the flour-mill at Dahlen. His path in life seems to have been comparatively free of thorns; nevertheless he lived to no old age, but died of some disorder on the 22nd November 1750, after two-and-twenty years of married happiness, leaving his widow with five surviving children, among them three daughters: Johanna Sophie, Christine Eleonore, and Susanna Caroline. Of these children the fourth in seniority is our Gottlob Friedrich Wagner, born at Müglenz on February 18, 1736. His younger brother, Samuel August, was

* See *Prose Works* IV. 126: "It was a Saxon Count Bünau under whose protection our great Winckelmann enjoyed his earliest freedom from the common cares of life, and leisure to push his free researches in the region of artistic learning."

hardly five years old at the time of their father's death; two other children had died in earliest infancy.

Gottlob Friedrich was now just fourteen years of age; his childhood had been passed in the open scenery round Müglenz, with many a ramble along the banks of the Losse or among the foothills of the Hohberger Gebirge. A good share of his education he owed to his father himself, and then apparently—perhaps even in his father's lifetime—to some higher school in Leipzig. At such a school, at any rate, probably the Thomana, founded in 1728, he must have ended his period of secondary education. Whether of his own inclination, or at his parents' wish, he was to proceed to holy orders, and on March 16, 1759 (the year of the battle of Kunersdorf, of Schiller's birth and the death of Ewald von Kleist) we find him inscribed on the books of the Leipzig University as "Student of Theology"; but we meet him ten years later as excise-officer, and our happy bridegroom of Schönefeld.

What may have happened to the student of theology in the interval, to make him abandon a career to which he had devoted several years of study—whether some inner doubt or conscientious scruple, such as frequently crops up at the last moment, a deficiency of worldly means, or what not—we have no reliable grounds for judging. The data about his life are scanty, presenting us with merely a vista here and there, omitting whole stretches of his history, and leaving gaps which it is no easy matter to fill with any certainty. In the year 1765, about the time when Goethe, just sixteen years of age, was removing from Frankfort to Leipzig, the "town of fashion" on the Pleisse, and taking up his abode in the "Feuerkugel" on the Neumarkt, we find Gottlob Friedrich once more expressly mentioned as student of theology. Certainly the means with which he was furnished for the battle of life were none too ample, consisting rather in real estate of head and heart than in personal property. Perhaps, therefore, we may assume that, to find the wherewithal for the completion of his studies, he followed for awhile the traditional calling of his ancestors, the example of so many an impecunious Theologian, and temporarily filled the post of teacher; helping, let us say, his future father-in-law, Schoolmaster Eichel, in his functions at one of the Leipzig schools? We find him while still a student in close relation with Eichel, more especially with his fair daughter Sophie, and whereas we are vouchsafed no other clue to his

quitting Theology for a practical civic career, *one* notable and perhaps determinant fact is yet on record. In the grandsire of our master, for all the narrowness of burgher life, it betrays an ardent temperament—"Urahnherr war der Schönsten hold" ("Forefather won the ladies' hearts"—Goethe). Alike the charms of the schoolmaster's nineteen-year-old daughter, and her inclination to the hot-blooded young student, must have been potent enough; for even before the Eichelin had become a Wagnerin in the eyes of the world, Johanna Sophia presented the elect of her heart with a love-pledge. On March 23, 1765, the child was baptised in the church of St Thomas with the names of its father and maternal grandfather;* but, no further notice of it having come to us, we must assume that it was never granted to repay its mother's shame and suffering by the joy of seeing it grow up to strength and manhood.

Whether it be that even in the sparkish Leipzig of last century, with its notoriously free manners and lenience toward the gallant vices of polite society, such an irregularity was rigorously visited on the head of a young plebeian aspiring to serve the Church or School; or whether our Gottlob Friedrich had inner reasons for bidding farewell to Theology,—it is about this time that he must have taken the decisive step, and chosen a career that offered speedier prospects of the material independence needful for riveting in permanence the bond already knit by love.

Such are the only antecedents, known as yet, of the wedding-feast at pleasant little Schönefeld in 1769.

Gottlob Friedrich Wagner had found the desired means of sustenance for himself and his in the administrative department of the Electoral Saxon General Excise. As early as the 16th century a system of territorial taxes had been adopted in Saxony and other German countries, together and almost simultaneously with imposts upon the consumer; but at the beginning of the 18th a total change was introduced by the establishment of a so-called "General-Konsumtions-Accise." The incidence of taxes was more evenly distributed, and a far larger body of consumers laid under contribution. At the entrance to every town a duty

* The godparents are recorded as: Maria Christina Lutz, daughter of journeyman-mason Johann Georg Lutz; Johann Reisser, market-help; Johann Friedrich Teicher, silk-worker; all of this place.

was levied on all raw materials, manufactured goods, and foodstuffs; at Leipzig, where the matter was in the hands of the town authorities, there were at that time four such entrances, the Rannstadt, the Halle, the Grimma and the Peter Gates. Gottlob Friedrich Wagner was stationed at the first-named, the Rannstädter Thor, leading to the Brühl with its eventual birthplace of Richard Wagner, the house of the "white and red lion." To every incomer on foot or wheels, along the paved Rannstädter highway from the old "Water-gate" outside, he had to address the regulation "Quis? Quid? Unde? Cur?"; he inspected travellers' passports, and levied the gate-dues—not wholly abolished until 1824. That he had an "education far beyond the level of a civil-servant of those days," is attested by a note in the *Litterarischer Zodiakus und Konversationslexikon der neuesten Zeit und Litteratur* of September 1835, in course of an article on Adolf Wagner; and so diligent and faithful was he in the discharge of his official duties, that we find the Assistant-exciseman of 1769 made five years later a Superintendent (Ober-Einnehmer), a position not merely lucrative, but also of some civic dignity, for in smaller Saxon towns we often meet it in combination with that of the presiding Burgomaster.*

The establishment of G. F. Wagner's household took place at a time when the blessings of peace were doubly welcome. Six years had passed since the signing of the Peace of Hubertsburg, and the town of Leipzig was just beginning to recover from the devastations of war, the forced contributions levied by Frederick the Great, the shameful coinage operations of Ephraim Itzig & Co. at Castle Pleissenburg.† "Von aussen gut, von innen

* On Feb. 2, 1702, at Pirna there died the Electoral Excise-receiver and ruling Burgomaster, Johann Gottlieb Wagner, born in 1654, a son of the Pirna Town-councillor and merchant, Johann Wagner. This family, however, does not appear to have been connected with the line of Emanuel Wagner; its origin was in Bohemia, where Johann Gottlieb's grandparents on both sides "left their fair property of real estate and chattels, through the troubles of the anti-reformation, to turn their exiled steps toward Pirna." Thus an old obituary notice of this Pirna Excise-receiver and Burgomaster, which closes with an oration for the soul of "Wagner passing from us on the soft and blessed wain of death": "his death-wain," so runs the old printed document, "was a veritable car of triumph; but godless men and unbelievers shall have far other wagons, to roll them into Hell."

† Frederick the Great had farmed alike the Berlin mint and that of Saxony to Court-jeweller Ephraim Itzig, and grain by grain this man so lowered the

schlimm; von aussen Friedrich, von innen Ephraim," this folk-rhyme (quoted at Wahnfried in the master's last years of life) long preserved the memory of those Prussian ducats, even after Friedrich August the Just had sought with some success to mitigate the effect of all these ills. Now a time of peaceful expansion and adornment was commencing for the Linden-city,* which impressed young Goethe—in comparison with his native town—by its lack of ancient monuments, but wealth of tokens of material prosperity and social animation. The founding of many an art-institute, the housing of rare collections, the installation of new buildings and gardens, contributed no little to confer on Leipzig its sobriquet of "Paris minor." The Frankfort student was struck above all by "those gigantic buildings with façades on either side, enclosing in their heaven-scaling courts a world of citizens, more like huge castles, nay, in themselves half-cities." Thus on the Rathhaus Place stood the palatial Hohenthal and Apel houses, with the Auerbachischer Hof, celebrated not more for its "cellar" than for the abundance of all conceivable wares for dress and personal adornment in its countless stores and shopfronts, of which latter alone it contained six-and-forty down to the year 1799: a favourite rendezvous for the fashionable world, particularly at fair-time, and sung by many a poet.

Among the recent embellishments of the town not the least noteworthy was the new Playhouse, built close beside our Gottlob Friedrich's dwelling, on the site of the former bastion of the Elector Moritz, and founded by the liberality of a wealthy merchant. The actor's art usurped the habitat of war, a pledge and token of reviving ease. The house had been opened with Schlegel's patriotic "Hermann" and no small ceremony on the 6th of October 1766, and within its roomy walls the skilful hand of Oeser had painted the new drop-curtain while the Frankfort student read aloud to him the proof-sheets of Wieland's "Musarion."

In the absence of definite evidence, we may assume that the receiver-of-customs took pleasure in the art which won such lively interest from his fellow-townsmen; we have no hint, however, of

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monetary standard that at last the "mark fine," worth 14 thalers, had come to be the equivalent of 45. Of these "Ephraimites" seven-million thalers-worth were sent into the world.

* The name of Leipzig is derived from the Slavonian "*lipa*—lime-tree."

any personal leaning or relation toward the drama. In his household intercourse, so far as ascertainable, we are not taken beyond the strictly burgher circle of comrades of like standing with himself. We meet no Leipzig Garrick or Roscius there, but the worthy supervisors of the *Land-Accise*, Heinrich Baudius and Johann Georg Reinicke with wife; the gate-clerk, Karl Gottfried Körner; shopkeepers Adam Horn and Joh. Gottfried Sintenis, with their ladies; Despatcher of the Electoral imposts, Karl Friedrich Ferber, *et al.* A well-to-do "burgher and vintner" Adolf Völbling is found among them; he stood godfather to the second son born to G. F. Wagner in wedlock, Gottlob Heinrich Adolf, commonly known by the last of these three names. Before Adolf, his elder brother Friedrich had been born in 1770, the year of Beethoven's birth; after him, Frau Johanna Sophia presented her husband with yet a daughter, Johanna Christiana Friederike, born 1778, whose memory Richard Wagner cherished to his dying day as his maiden "Aunt Friederike."

Beyond the testimony of that notice above-quoted, Gottlob Friedrich's bent toward higher culture is proved by the careful education he gave to his two sons, Friedrich and Adolf Wagner, in whom it is still more plainly manifested. That bursting away from the stifling materialism of our modern culture into the open air of art-creation, which we find so amazingly illustrated in the pre-eminently artistic mind of Richard Wagner—Nature seems to have already been trying for it in his uncle and his father; together with the most untiring diligence, she planted in the one the passion to assimilate the intellectual gains of every age and people, in the other that predilection for theatric art which runs as a scarlet thread through all his life. We will first direct attention to the younger brother, and thereafter pass with the older to the earliest impressions brought to bear on Richard Wagner.

II.

ADOLF WAGNER.

Years of study at Leipzig and Jena.—Friendship with Arnold Kanne and Joh. Falk.—"Two Epochs of Modern Poetry."—Personal and literary connections: August Apel, Wendt and Brockhaus.—Apel's "Polyidos."—Translations and original poems.

> *His name is an honoured one in that group of men of mind and character who partly by creative force have founded a new epoch in any branch of mental culture, in part by zeal and diligence have helped to cherish and mature the intellectual gains of Germany; in union with the best of his age and nation he ever battled valiantly against the vulgar, bad and superficial, in Life and Literature.*
>
> NECROLOGUE ON ADOLF WAGNER.*

> *In all that falls from mortal benches there needs must be much dross and shavings. Good, if a silver-gleam shews here and there, and the king of metals has not vanished quite away! This, I may hope, I have preserved.*
>
> ADOLF WAGNER.

THIS chapter is devoted to the life and mental evolution of one who formed a prominent and familiar figure in our hero's earlier surroundings, who presents many a feature in common with his great nephew, and whose memory was honoured by Richard Wagner to his latest days.

"A mind better adapted for assimilating the most diverse forms of human knowledge can scarcely ever have been bred, yet scarcely ever concentrated on so little use," says an old writer.† "He eagerly stretched out his hand to every detail,

* From an old collection entitled "*Neuer Nekrolog der Deutschen*" (Weimar, Voigt), xiii. 649-51.

† The anonymous author of the Necrologue cited in our motto—perhaps the æsthete Amadeus Wendt himself.

since all things interested him, and in his mobile brain he had an implement for each; but never did he satisfy himself in his work, or do justice to his own original nature in what he wrote." Furnished with this many-sidedness, Adolf Wagner came into the world on November 15, 1774. From the age of nine he was educated at the Leipzig Thomana, where he soon evinced a bent toward philologic studies. At eighteen he was entered for the Theologic Faculty at the Leipzig University, though from the very beginning of his student-days he was more attracted by the lore of classical antiquity. In this he was encouraged by the example of the most eminent among his theologic teachers, Chr. Daniel Beck, one of those astoundingly learned Germans of days gone by, who, starting from old Roman Law, had urged through Exegesis and the Fathers to the field of Universal History, distinguished himself as an expert in historic regions partly opened for the first time by himself, and yet whose native soil remained old-classical philology. To train young philologians to be teachers in the higher schools, was one main object of his energy; thus he wished to attach young Adolf Wagner to the university for good. But the inner inclination of this gifted pupil met the wish with an insuperable obstacle; his eager thirst for knowledge was coupled with a keen desire of independence, for whose sake he preferred all kinds of sacrifice to entering an academic life.

Besides his theological and philologic studies, Adolf was powerfully attracted by the revival of German philosophy. In this respect, however, he had to depend much more on private reading, than on public lectures. He was also drawn toward modern languages, particularly the Italian and its literature—in the event a chief department of his scholarship.

Having rejected many an inducement to assume a definite official standing, the death of his father soon made it a necessity for him to put alike his knowledge and his independence to the test. It was Jena more than any other place, that now attracted our young friend; Jena at that time the home of German letters, where Fichte, Schelling, Steffens, the two Schlegels, Gries and Brentano were revolving round "the triad constellation" Goethe, Schiller and Wieland. With a friend, and not without adventures, he journeyed thither in 1798, made the acquaintance of Schiller, and was welcomed almost daily to the poet's hospitable house until Schiller himself

removed to Weimar. He also attended the lectures of Fichte, who, called to Jena four years earlier, had begun to found his own philosophic system while forming the amorphous minds of students. Everybody has heard of Fichte's troubles, due to misunderstandings of all kinds, disunion with his colleagues, and lastly to his native headiness and obstinacy; he was accused of atheism, and Adolf had to see his much-prized teacher indignantly hand in his resignation and find it promptly ratified. But here again A. Wagner gave more time to private studies and the vital stimulus of personal intercourse, than to attendance at academic lectures. In company he was "an amiable and charming figure, and tasted the sweets of life in many an attractive relation." His modest wants he satisfied by literary work, translations from all manner of languages, contributions to critical and other journals, etc., while he bore the pinch of outward straits with the calm indifference of a lofty mind.

One boon-companion and life-long friend secured at Jena was Arnold Kanne, the scholarly and ill-starred explorer of Etymology and Myth. Neither difference of disposition, nor Kanne's restless love of roaming, could dissipate this friendship. In the summer of 1806, when war broke out with France, Kanne entered the Prussian service, and was taken prisoner by the French after the disaster at Jena. Through twenty raw November days he had to march in his light uniform, with insufficient food. One night-march through the forest near Vach he managed to escape, and found shelter in the nearest village upon producing from his breeches-pocket two letters that proclaimed him not a soldier, but a literary man and author: the one was from Jean Paul, the other, but a few months old, from Adolf Wagner. Thus he arrived at last at Meiningen, a beggar where a few years previously he had been driving with its Duke; but since he was barred by French and German troops from access to the town, he entered military service again, and this time with the Austrians. How he quitted it, he tells us in his autobiography. He was down with fever in the lazaretto at Linz, despairing of life and fate: "Suddenly," so he relates, "there came an unawaited aid. I had written to my friend Adolf Wagner in Leipzig, the only one with whom I kept up correspondence, whatever my lot, and who loved me as faithfully as I loved him. Scarcely four-

teen days had I left the hospital, when—as if dropped from the skies—a man arrived as envoy from bookseller Hasslinger of Linz, and bade me to the latter's house. It was a matter of buying me out, and in effect I became a free man for 160 guldens. For long I believed that Hasslinger himself had done it, upon hearing that I was author of the just-published *Erste Urkunde der Geschichte*. It seemed all the more probable, as Hasslinger had neither wife nor child, and said nothing to undeceive me. But from recent information I now am certain that President Jakobi of Munich was my liberator, and Jean Paul, to whom Adolf Wagner had written, must have supplied the first incentive. My friend had moved every stone, and even petitioned the Austrian Minister of War, von Dohm, to save me from my awkward plight." In other pages of his memoirs, too, Kanne speaks with the deepest gratitude of his "dear friend Adolf Wagner, who was much too good for me, and took no stock of my great failings." The appendix to a Mythological Survey in Kanne's "Chronos" describes their mutual relations and development in common. A "Pangloss" shewing the unity of Religion and Speech was to have been published, Kanne collecting the material to be worked up by Wagner, who had already begun a philosophic introduction in Latin for sake of wider circulation; but the work was abandoned, as Kanne took a turn toward mysticism at Erlangen, and fanatically committed the manuscript to the flames. Notwithstanding Wagner's difference of opinion on this point, and the many arguments to which it led, the good-feeling of the two friends remained the same; merely their epistolary correspondence grew scantier as the years rolled on.

Adolf Wagner experienced a similar inner change on the part of another Jena friend, Johannes Falk, whose first satiric poems, published in the *Deutscher Mercur* under the auspices of Wieland, had enjoyed the wellnigh enthusiastic praise of the aged poet: "the spirit of Juvenal seems to have been so abundantly poured into him, that not even the fate of the Roman poet could avail to scare him from his course."* This young satirist's revolt against

* Falk had given proof of his fearlessness at Halle, in a satirical puppet-play whose dramatis personæ took the form of horn-owls, screech-owls, night-owls and ravens; the performance was witnessed by a crowd of professors and representatives of every class, and set the whole city by the ears owing to its

the spirit of his times is expressed in his poems "Die Helden" and "Die Gräber zu Kon," but in later life his mind was tuned to kindlier feelings toward mankind at large; having lost his own children, he founded an institute at Weimar for technical civil education of orphans of the slain in war—the horrors whereof he himself had often witnessed in the years 1806 and 1813. It was for the benefit of this institute that Adolf Wagner edited in 1819 a three-volume selection from the best works of one whose temper, honesty and sacrifice, had won his high esteem.

Schiller having left for Weimar, Fichte having resigned his post, and Adolf's room-chum having gone to Vienna in pursuit of other studies, after a year of residence in Jena young Wagner returned to his native city, which he now made his permanent abode, though the next few years were marked by trips to various other cities, in particular to Dresden, Berlin and Breslau. Of the splendid buildings of the place last-named, its ancient churches, beautiful gardens such as the Ziegelbastei, and surrounding scenery, the Morgenau and blue chain of the Riesengebirge, he speaks with affection in later years. In Dresden, to which his visits were more frequent, he became a close friend of Ludwig Tieck, whose acquaintance he had already made towards the end of his Jena period, and for whom he cherished a vast respect throughout his life.

Among the philologic works that arose under the influence of Beck belongs his earliest essay, *De Alcestide Euripidea* (Leipzig 1797), which he followed up with a complete edition of the Alcestis after his return from Jena. Twenty years later he returned to this subject, with his revision of Seybold's translation. A translation of "Cæsar's Annals" may be mentioned on account of its having appeared at *Bayreuth* in 1808; more important is his German version of Sophocles' Œdipus Tyrannus, with a lengthy introduction of his own. In the first years of his return to Leipzig we also have a German rendering of the "Discourses of Ulrich von Hutten," followed by a whole series of popular histories of the Reformers (Zwingli, Leipzig, 1800; Wycliffe,

open allusions to personages of the day, protégés of the all-powerful Wöllner. An anonymous letter from Berlin advised immediate flight, as it needed but an order of the Cabinet to clap him into prison. Falk remained, and—the Cabinet-order stayed away.

1801; Erasmus, 1802; Hutten, 1803; Jerome of Prague, 1803; Œcolampadius, 1804). At like time he busied himself continually with Italian literature, and became such a master of the language that he was equally expert in translating into, as from it.* Thus it was a special joy to him, to have been the first to render the euphony of Fouqué's charming "Undine" into the melting accents of the South. When Weigl's opera *Die Schweizerfamilie* was to be made presentable at the Dresden Court by turning it into Italian, there was nothing for it but to apply to Adolf Wagner, who thus became entrusted with the task of Italianising a *German* work for a *German* Residenz-theater,—"da rappresentarsi nel teatro reale di Sassonia," as it runs on the title-page. The first performance of this harmless sentimental work in the German language did not take place at Dresden until long thereafter, under K. M. von Weber and on Richard Wagner's fifth birthday, May 22, 1818. Just as gradual was the passage of Mozart's works into the domain of *German* Opera (founded by Weber), after having been confined for long to Italian singers and the Italian tongue.†

One fruit of Adolf Wagner's saturation with the spirit of Italian poetry was his larger treatise styled "*Zwei Epochen der modernen Poesie*, dargestellt in Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, Goethe, Schiller und Wieland" (Leipzig, Breitkopf und Härtel, 1806). The avowed object of this work was "to select two principal groups from the

* His admirable translation of Gozzi's dramatic fairy-tale "The Raven" (Leipzig 1804) was the first to aim at an exact reproduction, and not a free adaptation, giving iambics where the original has iambics, prose where it has prose; previously there had been none but Werthes' rendering of Gozzi's pieces —a rendering employed as basis of Schiller's "Princess Turandot." Mention may also be made of his collection of tales called "*Scherz und Liebe*, in italienischen Novellen."

† In her *Souvenirs* "Daniel Stern" (the Comtesse d'Agoult, mother of Frau Cosima Wagner) recalls the time of Charles X., when the families of the Faubourg St Germain would not allow their daughters to go to the Play, but took them to the Italian Opera, for two sufficient reasons: "les chanteurs italiens n'étaient point excommuniés, et l'on ne comprenait pas les paroles." The case was still worse in the capital on the Elbe, for not only the "daughters," but the whole population until the time of Weber were restricted to Italian Opera, and took the unintelligibleness of the words as a main essential. Three quarters of a century later Richard Wagner declares that, apart from the very nature of the current German translations of Mozart's operas, other means had been adopted to make the text quite unintelligible, and consequently harmless to "uncorrupted youthful hearers of the female sex" (*P. W.* VI. 151).

picture of the modern world, and see if they would not shew the inner harmony of the whole great canvas." What strikes one most in this "Two Epochs" is the penetration with which its author contravenes the insane attempt to stamp the work of Goethe and Schiller as an epoch rounded in itself, a kind of "golden age" like the *siècle d'or* of the French, instead of seeing therein "the nucleus of a new world of concentration of forces hitherto dispersed." For we now know what that "new world" needed for its full development, the new inspiring might of Music.—

Let us turn for awhile to the surroundings that influenced the inner and outer life of the young scholar in his native city. As he himself has said, "our surroundings lend us colour, though their harmonising is a matter of our freedom," and certainly his Leipzig milieu embraced the ablest talents of his day. In the front rank we have the noted Councillor August Apel, a man of many gifts, born of a patrician family, living in affluence, staunch and true in word and deed. Of him Adolf Wagner says: "He was a man of open mind. Delighting in nothing but what sprang from one's own efforts, he looked askance at the mere gifts of Fortune, and thus seemed cold and distant to the superficial observer. But see him on his own estate, where he passed the summer months in the society of his friends and the poets of past or present ages; then you find in him a noble, generous, high-minded man, nay, rather a playful child, who loves to hide his seriousness behind a sportive mask." In times of war he rendered many a service to his native city through his keen forethought, cool judgment and swiftness of resource; yet, just as in his poems (notably the "Freischütz" and "Das stille Kind") there is evinced a trend towards the weird and spectral, so in his private life we find a certain tinge of superstition. The following story is told of him by Adolf Wagner: when standing godfather to the infant daughter of a friend, he made the child a present of a cask of wine, to be kept for her wedding-day, but with the stipulation that it must then be drained, or his ghost would appear as a guest at the wedding.

Another friend was Amadeus Wendt, who had taken up his residence in Leipzig since 1808, thereafter to be summoned to Göttingen; Adolf Wagner exerted a decisive influence on his career, for it was he who directed his thoughts to philosophy and

æsthetics, and thus laid the foundation of his future fame. Yet another was the "Hofräthin" Minna Spazier, who had settled in Leipzig since the death of her husband (the founder of the much-read *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*); her beauty and amiability made her a great favourite in rather exclusive circles, where she often met both Apel and A. Wagner. She was on the best of terms with her two brothers-in-law, Jean Paul and Mahlmann, who assisted her from time to time in her editorial labours; A. Wagner also contributed many an article to her *Taschenbuch für Liebe und Freundschaft*, and it was through Minna Spazier that he made the acquaintance of the rising young publisher Friedrich Brockhaus, who mentions both Wagner and Wendt in a letter as among his "dearest acquaintances." Once, when offering a handsome prize for a long epic poem for his journal the *Urania*, he named Apel, Wendt and Adolf Wagner as the judges; before its publication, however, they insisted on submitting their verdict to Goethe (the prize falling to Ernst Schulze's "Bezauberte Rose"). Brockhaus also secured A. Wagner as one of the first contributors to his *Konversationslexikon*, commenced in 1812.

His popularity, and the esteem in which he was held in so many circles, are sufficiently explained by the high qualities of his mind and character and his eminently social gifts. A contemporary sets his personal and literary traits in somewhat crying contrast, saying that in all that he wrote he merely brought forth chips and splinters of the rich mine of thought within him; that by wishing to give out too much he often gave too little, and constructed for himself a German style whose curiously suggestive hieroglyphs too frequently involved one in a battle for life or death: "but when he *spoke*, he altogether cast away this interwoven stiffness, and never have I heard a German who expressed himself with a nobler flow of melody in thought and language; added to which, though fond of leading the conversation, he always preserved the greatest unassumingness of manner." Moreover he possessed a rich and sonorous voice, which made him rank beside his famous friend Tieck as a favourite reciter.

One day at Apel's country-seat A. Wagner was reading to an intimate audience the former's just-completed Æschyleian poem, the "Polyidos." The poet was surprised to find his friend stop short from time to time without adducing any other reason than a certain idiosyncrasy of rhythm; which gave the first impetus to

Apel's well-known theory of "Metrics." A private performance of this tragedy in the year 1806, conducted by Adolf Wagner after the manner of the ancients, confirmed his first impression: Apel found that the rhythm of the verses, constructed on the customary rules of metre, underwent all sorts of changes as it passed from mouth to mouth; the *beat* was found to be the only possible, but indispensable bond of union. The poet's thorough knowledge of music had made him partly guess at this before; so now, at Wagner's instigation, he devoted nearly ten years of unwearied research to perfecting a system of metrics that was already complete in all essentials when death removed its author. Prejudice, ignorance of music, and professional spite, made the new theory distasteful to the guild of philologians, at whose head stood Gottfried Hermann; but even during Apel's lifetime some of his discoveries were smuggled into the second edition of his chief opponent's "Doctrina Metrica."

It was this private performance of Apel's "Polyidos" that prompted Adolf Wagner's own German rendering of Sophocles' "Œdipus Tyrannus." The translation cannot be said to rank very high among its author's many kindred works, and it has been severely dealt with by his adversaries. In its preface, however, while the author protests against the "Hellenising spirit" of his times, he gives us the guiding principle of his literary career: namely, that "Art is a world-growth whose component parts are formed of various peoples; beneath the influence of light it springs from earth, it blossoms, bears its fruit, and fades; and thus it has its history like every other mortal thing, or rather every fallen thing divine." Against the pseudo-Hellenism of Schlegel's "Ion," as compared with Goethe's "Iphigenia" and Schiller's "Bride of Messina," Adolf Wagner had already taken the field with a satirical burlesque "Der Bühnenschwarm, oder das Spiel der Schauspieler" (1804), in which he contrasted the "new Italian Græcomania" with the older "naturalism" of Iffland's moving pictures from domestic life. But to that "world-tree" and the changeful story of its many branches he was never tired of returning from his diligent researches in so many realms of knowledge. To this we owe his translation of Gozzi's "Raven" already-mentioned, as also the much later one of Byron's "Manfred." Thus, too, in an essay called "Theater und Publikum: eine Didaskalie von A. Wagner"

(Leipzig, Weygand, 1826) he gives us a review of the Drama's evolution among the various European peoples, with the expressed desire "to free the German Theatre from its present subservience to mere luxury and ennui, and point it to a mission worthy of the stage, the audience, and good taste." Here, with thorough German universalism, he recommends a systematic presentation of the dramatic works of every age and people, insisting for instance, quite in the manner of his friend Tieck, on a literally unaltered reproduction of Shakespeare. As might have been expected, this rather pedantic than practical conception of the Theatre was met by volleys of abuse.

Finally we have to record a collection of dramatic efforts under the title "Theater," consisting of four original comedies: "Umwege" (in five acts), "Liebesnetze," "Ein Augenblick" and "Hinterlist" (one act each). The well-known authority H. Kurz considers that in the "Umwege," a dramatisation of an Italian novel of Bandello's, A. Wagner was shipwrecked by the inappropriateness of the subject-matter, whereas the "Augenblick" and "Liebesnetze" are far more successfully handled, and written in a clearer, tenderer vein.* In spite of the tardy appearance of this collection (1816), we believe that its constituents all date from A. Wagner's first period, perhaps a little later than his "Bühnenschwarm." In this connection we may also note a novel entitled "Liebestand und Liebesernst" (Jena, 1818); a book, however, which no efforts have enabled us to get sight of.

The above review of Adolf Wagner's literary doings, in the way of both erudition and belles lettres, may serve as indication of his constant labour to assimilate the remotest products of the human world, alike in the domain of History as in that of Thought. This strong-marked bent to universality gives us a lively foretaste of the spirit of his own great nephew; yet the outward compass of his field of vision, and the mass of objects it embraced, had to be allied with an incomparably greater power of intentness, to lead that nephew to triumphant revelation of the German Spirit's universal scope.

* H. Kurz, *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur*, vol. iii., p. 395.

III.

FRIEDRICH WAGNER.

Birth and childhood.—Impressions derived from Schiller's works.—Legal studies and general culture.—"Gerichtsaktuarius" Wagner in Leipzig amateur theatricals.—Marriage with Johanna Bertz.—Friends of the house.—A quiverful.—The "Maid of Orleans" and "Bride of Messina."

> *It was a time of noble promise when the classic spirit of antiquity rewoke in the poetic warmth of our great masters, and from the stage the "Bride of Messina" re-aroused both young and old to study of the mighty Greeks.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

As we are unable to commence this chapter with a picture of domestic life in the Excise-officer's lodge by the Rannstadt Gate, we will rescue a couple of sober dates from the dust of parish-registers. According to these, our hero's father was born on June the 18th, 1770, the year of Ludwig Beethoven; the first-fruit of the marriage of his parents, concluded in the previous year, he was baptised two days afterwards with the names Karl Friedrich Wilhelm. Besides his maternal grandfather, schoolmaster Eichel, the godparents were gate-clerk Karl Gottfried Körner and Christina Elisabeth Wahl, wife of Joh. Friedrich Wahl, inspector of the Bärenburg mill.

We know very little for certain about his youth. However, his first twenty years of life coincided with many an event in the Leipzig chronicles of art and culture that cannot have remained without influence upon the growing lad. A "privileged" theatre had recently been established, where Döbbelin's troupe gave performances of German plays and singspiels, to the public's great delight; as already stated, it stood quite close to his father's house, and needs must have entered largely into the impressions of his earliest childhood. Although the Court's original intention

to found a *German* Theatre at Dresden and Leipzig had been abandoned owing to its contract with the Italian Pasquale Bondini, who scarcely knew three words of German, yet under Bondini's own management the taste for German Burgher-drama began to make headway through the production of Lessing's pieces and the early works of Schiller;* and it is significant that most of Schiller's works came to an earlier hearing at Leipzig than at Dresden, since one had to reckon with the wishes of the Public here, but there with those of the Court. Bondini was succeeded by his former secretary, Franz Seconda, whose brother Joseph was manager of the Italian Opera at Dresden; and for some time the two Secondas took turn about with one another, the Opera coming to Leipzig, the Play going to Dresden, and vice versâ. At this epoch (1781) occurs the removal of the so-called "Grand Concerts," Leipzig's most important musical institution, from the quondam "Apel's house" to the old "Gewandhaus," whose large hall had been refitted for the purpose, and its ceiling embellished with allegoric paintings. Within these walls young Richard Wagner was one-day to drink his first draught of Beethoven's Symphonies (not a note of which had been written as yet); here too, soon after, he was to make his first bow to the public of his native town, and next—owing to a sudden turn in the tide of musical taste—to find those Concerts shut against him for the remainder of his life.

In what degree the institution last-named may have affected Friedrich Wagner we have no direct evidence, though his younger brother Adolf displays a taste for music at every period. Certain it is, that *dramatic* art roused Friedrich's enthusiasm at an early age. Step by step was he a witness of the great advance of German poetry from the "Messias" to "Götz," from the "Robbers" to "Wallenstein." We may imagine the twelve-year-old Thomanian attending the first Leipzig performances of the "Robbers," and thence deriving the incentive to his later passion for the theatre and personal veneration of the poet. Not long

* It was the same in other places: for instance Prague, whose German theatre was first brought to a degree of brilliance by the Italian Domenico Guardasoni through the engagement of firstrate talents such as Essläir. Nothing, in fact, could be done without Italians, particularly where German *Courts* were concerned. "At these Courts, whenever Art and Music formed the topic, the first thought flew to foreigners, black-bearded for choice" (*P. W.* VI. 8).

thereafter followed "Kabale und Liebe," which Richard Wagner characterises as that work of Schiller's which supplies "perhaps the strongest proof, as yet, of what could be done in Germany by a full accord between Theatre and Poet" (*P. W.* IV. 88). At Leipzig the piece had the same immense success as everywhere else,—Friedrich Wagner was just fifteen years of age. Then the young poet came himself, in answer to an invitation from Körner's enthusiastic band of friends, and stayed for some months in the town on the Pleisse. During his stay the "Fiesco" attained its first Leipzig performance; the effect was weaker than that of "Kabale und Liebe," and naturally, for Schiller tells us that seven of his scenes had been expunged, the dénouement altered, and several of the actors utterly ruined their parts. Finally—"Don Carlos"; but again under great disadvantages, for, in addition to the impertinences already practised on "Fiesco," the actors positively refused to declaim in verse: a curious result of that naturalistic tendence of the Burgher-drama from which so much good had sprung. Schiller himself had to consent to turn his work into prose for Leipzig, at the remuneration of sixty thalers; had he declined, it would simply have been put in the hands of some literary hack. In effect, Goethe's "Mitschuldige" had first been given in a prose rendering by Dr Albrecht; a fate which "Clavigo" and the "Geschwister" fortunately escaped by anticipation.*

In his twentieth year Friedrich Wagner appears to have attended the University of his birthplace as a student of Law,—brother Adolf had not yet left the Thomas-school. In the event he became a sound and practical official in power of his manly, energetic nature: how far he may have distinguished himself in his student years by a knowledge of legal theory, beyond the requirements of his future calling, we do not know; but we can assume no particular liking for the dry bones of professional study in one so keenly alive to art and literature. As to his early

* Rightly to judge of this, we must take into consideration the state of the German theatre at that time. "Brought up in the school of so-called Naturalism, the actors believed it impossible to master these rhythmic verses save by reducing them to prose," says Richard Wagner (*P. W.* IV. 203); and Genast, an ear-witness, tells us that in the opposite event the accented syllables were so intolerably drawled that you might fancy yourself listening to a saw-mill. As a consequence, it was with ever greater reluctance that Schiller consented to make over his works to the theatre.

devotion to general culture, on the other hand, we have among other things the evidence of a well-stocked library of classical and contemporary authors, collected in the course of many years; a library which after his death becomes the object of epistolary negotiations between the eldest son Albert and his uncle Adolf. That the warm-hearted young man found many comrades among his fellow-students, will be easily understood, and we may probably date from this period several of those lasting friendships which we meet in later years, such as that with his official colleague Gottfried Karl Barthel.

In September 1794, father Gottlob Friedrich Wagner celebrated his silver wedding in the bosom of his family; six months later (March 21, 1795) he died in the prime of life. The bereavement fell too late to exercise any decisive influence on Friedrich's outward circumstances: whilst the grown-up sister remained with the mother, who survived her husband by fully nineteen years, and Adolf was still at his philologic studies under Beck in the Leipzig University, young Friedrich was already on his own feet, and able to assist in the support of his relatives. He had lately entered the service of the State, as deputy-registrar (*Vice-Aktuarius*) at the Leipzig Town-court, and his clear intelligence, unselfishness and candour soon won him the respect alike of his superiors and fellow-townsmen. Yet he still maintained a lively interest in the mental activity of his age and surroundings, and refused to let his official duties numb his taste for poetry and dramatic art. Thus he took part in private theatricals on an amateur stage from time to time, playing, among others, in a performance of Goethe's "Mitschuldige."

As there was no standing company at Leipzig then, but Seconda's people left for Dresden every winter, not to return before Easter, the theatre-lovers of the former city had frequent recourse to this form of entertainment. Its chief locality was that mansion on the Rathhaus Place to which Goethe still refers in his Leipzig reminiscences as "Apel's Haus," but which had subsequently passed into the possession of Electoral Commissary-of-the-Exchequer Andreas Friedrich Thomä, and at this time was commonly known as the Thomä'sches Haus, the property of Jungfer Jeannette Thomä, unmarried daughter of that wealthy merchant, herself a great friend of both the brothers Wagner and their sister Friederike. Massively constructed, four storeys high,

with a piazza above the highest, sixteen windows broad, and of considerable depth from front to back, it was no unfit palace for reception of the Electoral family, who made its state-apartments their regular abode whenever they stayed in Leipzig. Among its hinder buildings was a roomy hall, with a ceiling painted by some unknown hand to represent Olympus. In earlier times the Leipzigers' especial pride, the aforesaid "Grand Concerts," had had their home here; since their migration to the Gewandhaus, the hall had still more frequently been used for amateur theatricals. Friedrich August himself was partial to this form of diversion, as also were Princes Anton and Max, and whenever the Elector came to Leipzig there was sure to be an amateur performance. On such occasions men like Lembert and Gubitz repeatedly appeared as actors; young people who proposed to walk the stage, here made their bow; and here police-actuary Wagner gave personal proofs of his ardour for the theatre.

Three years after his father's death Friedrich Wagner set up house for himself, bringing home from Weissenfels on the Saale his bride Johanna Rosina Bertz,* a charming girl of nineteen years (June 2, 1798). "From her pleasant birthplace, where the echoes of a former Court had long since died away,† she brought with her neither a profound nor a many-sided culture; but she owned something better: a kindly gaiety, a swift instinctive grasp of the situation, and a practical talent for making the best of everything,"—it is thus that she lived in her children's recollection. Endowed with such gifts, she proved a faithful helpmeet to her husband, a loving mother to her numerous progeny.

To take a glance at Friedrich Wagner's private life, we find

* The name is also spelt "Berthis," in which form it appears in the attestation of Cäcilie's christening. Pronounced "Perthes," in dialect, it is the patronymic genitive of the man's name Berth, Brecht, or Precht, which means "the shining."

† The many-windowed Schloss Neu-Augustenburg, standing high above Weissenfels, was the Residency of the Dukes of Sachsen-Weissenfels down to 1746.—The characterisation of Johanna Wagner, printed above, is taken from the introduction to Prof. Gosche's work, *Richard Wagner's Frauengestalten.* Her grandson F. Avenarius describes her as "A pretty little woman, with a practical eye and keen mother-wit, whose natural gifts made up for any lack of thorough culture. The spelling in her letters is often faulty; not so their evidence of knowledge of the world. In everyone of those addressed *to* her we may trace the high respect in which she was held by all, and not the least by her great son, to her dying day" (*Augsb. Allg. Zeitung*, 1883).

him surrounded by a numerous circle of friends, for the most part from the legal and mercantile sections of Leipzig society, but also drawn from the theatre and allied regions. At christenings and other family-feasts the hospitable house on the Brühl * would entertain, besides the already-mentioned Town-clerk Barthel, Advocate and Excise-inspector Gottlieb Haase and wife, Consistorial-advocate Dr Karl Christoph Kind (son of the celebrated translator of Plutarch, and elder brother of the future librettist of *Der Freischütz*), Advocate Heinrich Karl Elias Schulze, Soapboiler Joseph Gottfried Töpfer with his wife Maria Regina, Dr Friedrich Ernst Gerlach, and many another. In later days they are joined by the art-loving tradesman Adolf Träger (an intimate of Adolph Wagner's too), Town-Registrar Paul David Pusch, and young Advocate Dr Wilhelm Wiesand; whilst a frequent "baptismal witness" (1803, 1807 and 1809) was the aforesaid Jeannette Thomä. Among the most prominent members of the Seconda troupe who were intimate friends of Friedrich's household we have the talented Wilhelmine Hartwig, née Werthen, a native of Leipzig. In 1796, at the age of nineteen, she had entered the Seconda company in place of Schiller's friend Sophie Albrecht, and particularly charmed the Leipzig public by her truth and naturalness of expression and gesture as Louisa in "Kabale und Liebe." An enthusiastic eye-witness writes of her in 1799, "Her beautiful brown eyes have a magic all their own; one must have no heart, not to feel moved to one's depths when those eyes are filled with tears of gentle grief, or lifted heavenward in quiet resignation, or fixed in the wild glare of madness." Perhaps we may detect an echo of this "Louisa" in the fact of

* It was called "The White and Red Lion," two houses having been thrown into one in the year 1661. The "Red Lion" is mentioned in documents of 1535, when Vincent Schöpperitz took it over from the heirs of Matthes Cleemann; the "White Lion" portion was so called until 1590, when it was changed to the "Three Swans," but seventy years thereafter it resumed its name in combination with the other "Lion." A huge lion over the entrance distinguished this birthplace of Richard Wagner until 1885, when the building was condemned as unsafe and pulled down. The door leading from Friedrich Wagner's living-room into the bedroom where Richard was born is now in London, having been presented by the Leipzig purchaser to the late Julius Cyriax, the well-beloved Secretary, and thereafter Treasurer, of the London Wagner Society; this precious relic, through which the little Richard must so often have passed, Mr Cyriax had fitted to a cabinet for the preservation of his other Wagner treasures.

Friedrich Wagner's having chosen the name for the baptism of his second daughter; as indeed, after her father's death, that daughter became the special protégée and pupil of this excellent woman and artist.

The first issue of F. Wagner's marriage was a son, Karl Albert (born March 2, 1799), whose striking likeness to his famous youngest brother in voice, gesture and gait, has often been remarked on. It is to his tenacious memory that we owe so many a tradition of the family-history and our hero's earliest childhood. As first-born he proved himself a true son of his father by his later choice and successful exercise of histrionic art, though a preponderance of practical sobriety outweighed his artistic impulses.

Karl Albert was followed by Karl Gustav, born on the 21st July 1801; Johanna Rosalie, born March 4, 1803; Karl Julius, August 7, 1804; Louise Constanze, December 14, 1805; Clara Wilhelmine, November 29, 1807; Marie Theresia, April 1, 1809; Wilhelmine Ottilie, March 14, 1811. Such a rapid succession necessarily brought the parents cares as well as joy. Two of the eight children above-named, the boy Gustav and the girl Therese, were carried off by illness at a tender age, the latter ere completion of her sixth year; the rest grew up in health and strength.

If we examine the progeny of Friedrich and Johanna Wagner from the point of view of the conditions antecedent to the birth of genius, we are struck by the fact that it was at the end of a long series, as it were of preliminary attempts on the part of Nature, that the subject of our biography was born (1813); also that he was preceded since 1804 by none but *sisters*, as if Nature had been husbanding her *virile* force for one in whose temperament it was to be so strongly manifested—just as in the case of Schiller, Mozart, Goethe, Schopenhauer and others, we find that they had sisters indeed, but either no brothers at all or merely weaklings whom death soon claimed.

However, we must not forestall events, but return to the order of our chronicle.

We have already alluded to the constant grotesqueries of rendering, on the part of German actors, which drove the two chief German poets into greater and greater estrangement from the actual theatre. Since his experiences with Don Carlos and Wallenstein, Schiller grew less and less inclined to expose his

works to such distortion; when putting his final touches to the "Maid of Orleans"—a thorough stage-piece, if ever there was one—he wrote with bitter resignation to friend Goethe, "After long deliberation I have decided *not* to let the piece be acted." Nevertheless it was, and at Leipzig too. Here in September 1801, on his way from a visit of several weeks to the Körner family at Dresden, the poet attended the first performance of his latest work.* Körner came with him. Actuary Wagner (then thirty-one years old) and his young wife were among the spectators, who faced round at the end of the first act towards the box in which the poet and his friends were seated, and shouted an enthusiastic "Vivat Friedrich Schiller." Trumpets and drums joined forces with the cheers of hearty acclamation. At close of the performance everyone rushed to the doors to see the author come out; bare-headed and in reverent silence the crowd cleared a passage for him, while fathers and mothers held their children high above the heads of those in front. According to Albert this first performance of the "Jungfrau" long ranked as an event in the Wagner household, and the 18th of September 1801 as a red-letter date. Frau Hartwig had put forth all her resources in the rôle of Johanna, and won the author's full approval; in fact the memory of her performance of that night still lingered in the mind of many an eye-witness even under the later impression made by the gifted Sophie Schröder. Yet the most affecting tokens of enthusiasm on the part of the audience could not blind the poet to the general faultiness of this representation of his work, and at a conference in the theatre a few days afterwards he complained of the "horrible maltreatment of his iambics," even the eminent Leipzig "Talbot," Ochsenheimer—of whom it was said that "without either hands or feet he would still have remained a great actor," so expressive was his play of features—not escaping the wholesale condemnation. What else was to be expected at a theatre where Iffland and Kotzebue, as everywhere in Germany, were the life and soul of the repertory?

In June 1803 Friedrich Wagner and his wife went for a summer trip to Lauchstädt, at that time a favourite watering-place with the neighbouring nobility and the best families of Leipzig.

* This was the very first performance of the *Jungfrau von Orleans* on any German stage; Berlin followed on the 23rd November, but Weimar not till April 23, 1803!

Schiller had arrived with the Weimar stage-company. Though he carefully sought out the most secluded walks, he was mobbed wherever he went, and indescribable enthusiasm attended the Lauchstädt performance of the "Bride of Messina," notwithstanding that a thunderstorm rattled over the roof with such violence that for a quarter of an hour at a stretch it was impossible to hear a word the actors uttered.

Meanwhile dark clouds were gathering above the German horizon. The Peace of Luneville had transferred Belgium and the whole left bank of the Rhine to France; three years later, on May 20, 1804, Napoleon was proclaimed hereditary Emperor of the French; at Cologne, on his triumphal progress through the Rhinelands, German citizens went so far as to take the horses from his carriage and drag him in it to the palace. If many a German Prince before had cast in his lot with France, to gain aggrandisement at the cost of his compeers, this happened now to a still more infamous extent: the ruin of all national independence was threatening Saxony as well.

IV.

LUDWIG GEYER.

Friendship of F. Wagner and L. Geyer.—Geyer's youth: taste for painting.—Talent for play-acting.—Years of wandering, with military interludes: Magdeburg, Stettin, Breslau.—Return to Leipzig; engagement in the Seconda company.—Relations with the Wagner family.

> *His taste for painting was the earlier, and the more pronounced. Had he been permitted to devote his whole energies to portrait-painting, quite apart from their marketable value as good likenesses, the works of his brush would have been treasured up in galleries as true art-products.*
>
> K. A. Böttiger on L. Geyer.

We have deferred all mention of a peculiarly important tie of friendship, uniting police-actuary Friedrich Wagner to the painter and comedian Ludwig Geyer, ten years his junior, that we might give the reader a more connected account of one whose destinies were so bound up with those of the Wagner family.

Ludwig Heinrich Christian Geyer, the eldest of three brothers, was born on the 21st of January 1780 in the little Luther-town of Eisleben, where his father acted as Actuary to the Overseer-in-chief. The father having been transferred to the Lower Court at Artern soon after Ludwig's birth, the family removed there, and young Geyer passed his first years of boyhood in that charming tract of green Thuringia, the basin of the "Goldene Aue," where the Unstrut flows clear between vineyards, fruit-laden orchards and grain-bowed cornfields, while the distance is encircled by a belt of amaranthine hills, their clasp the fabled Kyffhäuser. Here the boy's love of Nature throve apace, and with it his power of observation and gift of reproduction. Swift was his eye to seize each likeness, and not a characteristic trait escaped him. A painter from Leipzig soon taught the eager pupil all he knew, and

day by day his passion for the brush developed. But the father, not approving of a breadless art, intended him for jurisprudence, and despatched him at the age of fourteen to the Gymnasium at Eisleben. Thus Geyer returned for awhile to his native town, and his favourite pastime had to yield to serious studies. He next removed to the University of Leipzig, to devote himself to Law in fulfilment of his father's wish. An unexpected blow cut short his course at its commencement. The father had been nominated to a more lucrative post at Dresden, and set off to complete the requisite arrangements on the spot: on the return-journey the overloaded coach in which he was travelling turned over on one of the proverbially villainous Saxon roads.* He arrived at Leipzig, only to succumb to the results of the accident in the loving arms of his sons. This meant a time of great anxiety for Ludwig; robbed of the means of pursuing his own studies, he found the burden of providing for his family at like time thrown upon his shoulders. It was well for him now, that he had never quite left off the cultivation of his early taste; it became a means of livelihood, and while attending a course of finishing lessons at the Leipzig Academy of Drawing he was able to satisfy immediate needs by executing little portraits, in which his native gift of quick perception was his principal instructor. For the next two or three years he travelled from one small provincial town to another, and "painted young ladies and old gentlemen at the watering-places." About 1801 he returned to Leipzig, where he commenced his first acquaintanceship with Friedrich Wagner.

From their earliest meeting F. Wagner became his friend and adviser. It was his encouragement that induced the young painter to cultivate another gift, previously confined to the amusement of his intimates, a talent for play-acting. The eye of his experienced friend, to whom the artist always attributed the most powerful influence on his theatrical career, had been the soonest to discover it.

* "By the violent jolting of my carriage I know that I am on Saxon soil. The vileness of these Saxon causeways is a standing theme for the Jeremiads of a thousand travellers. The Elector has put aside 70,000 thalers for building new roads, and one is already commenced at Ziegelrode, in the vicinity of Artern. 'Things will mend in time;—they always move slowly with us in Saxony,' as you may hear from the Saxon himself, whom one would scarcely have credited with even that much power of reflection" (Letter from Saxony, in the Berlin *Freimüthige* of 1805).

At Wagner's instigation Geyer made his first attempt at the aforesaid private theatre in the Thomä house. His acting pleased, and he adopted the profession with a will, yet without bidding farewell to painting. His appearance was greatly in his favour: of faultless medium build of body, his features were eloquent and refined, as shewn us in a portrait painted by himself in riper years. Add to these an expressive and musical voice, not to be despised in lighter song, and a power of mimicry that enabled him to reproduce a characteristic as easily by facial play as on the canvas. Finally, a temperament of true artistic fibre, sensitive to the faintest change, and passing from the highest frolic to the deepest gloom. "He had no need to pinch himself, to find his humour," says a very good judge; yet it is distinctive of his twofold nature that, besides the spirited creations of his comic muse, he was peculiarly at home in the embodiment of crafty "villains" such as Iago, Franz Moor, Marinelli, the President in Kabale und Liebe, and the Duke of Alba in Egmont,—a line which afterwards became his speciality. At the beginning he tried his hand on lovers and young cavaliers, his first part being Don Carlos; only gradually did he find his province; but in every rôle his eye for psychological expression stood him in good stead, and as his portrait-painting gained him entrance to the most exclusive circles, where he learnt the manners of polite society, it was all the easier for him to reproduce them on the stage. Self-conceit was foreign to him throughout his life; he asked and heeded the advice of experts, and pleased himself the least of all.

In the next few years we meet him on various minor stages. At the Magdeburg house, then beginning to rank high among the provincial theatres of Germany, with a good ensemble that even ventured tasks like "Tell," he was classed as one of the most valued accessions. It was here that he heard, to his deep sorrow, of Schiller's death. The first Magdeburg performance of the Bride of Messina was changed into a threnody. At 6 o'clock, the hour of the poet's death, it began with mourning music; the stage, all hung with black, displayed a lofty catafalque with a black sarcophagus, over which the Genius of Germany extinguished a burning torch in an urn; the chorus of assembled actors intoned a dirge; all eyes were filled with tears. Then followed the representation of Schiller's work, in which the little Magdeburg stage eclipsed the fame of many a better-favoured.

During the summer closure, from July to August, the Magdeburg company betook itself to Brunswick, whose Ducal theatre was served at that time by a French troupe. Here, too, it won the praise of "its object not being mere pecuniary gain, but something higher," and Geyer's fancy and originality, especially in high comedy, were warmly recognised.

The same autumn, 1805, Geyer went to the newly-founded Stettin theatre. For years the citizens of Stettin had applied in vain for permission to have a standing theatre of their own, but a privilege long since conferred on Döbbelin's strolling company had stood in the way. The opening of this "standing" theatre was therefore a rather brilliant affair. However, the young artist's Stettin episode was of somewhat brief duration. The year of Germany's profoundest shame had tolled with the formation of the Rhine-League. In vain Prussia's ill-starred rising against a usurper to whom she had previously truckled; the spirit of great Frederick had flown from council-room and army; all was lost with the defeat at Jena and the surrender of the Silesian forts. A few days after the fall of Erfurt and Spandau, walled Stettin was given over (Oct. 29, 1806) in coward fear, without a blow, at the first demand of a detachment of French light cavalry, though the commander had a garrison of sevenfold strength and a hundred and twenty cannon! The disgraceful example of Stettin was followed by well-nigh impregnable Küstrin, and with incredible swiftness by the remaining fortresses. The King had to sign a peace whereby the victor gave him back his kingdom's half as act of grace. Prussia's disaster was the ruin of the scarcely inaugurated Stettin stage; Geyer again had to pick up his staff to woo fortune at Breslau.

His heart full of longing for Saxony and his distant friends, he arrived at the Silesian capital just after it had capitulated (Jan. 5, 1807). During his two years there he formed a close friendship with the musical conductor Gottlob Benedikt Bierey, a fellow-countryman from Leipzig, who preserved a true affection for him long after they had parted.* Besides his work as actor, Geyer still diligently plied his brush, as we may gather from a

* Thus in later years, when Director of the Breslau theatre, he took young Albert Wagner under his wing on his début there; to which Adolf Wagner refers in a letter to his nephew (after Geyer's death) as "this resurrection of the father's love, its legacy."

Breslau letter printed in the *Freimüthige* of August 1, 1809: "Herr Geyer, that excellent artist, whose acquisition would be a boon to any theatre, even the largest, has left us. He is also a talented portrait-painter, and Breslau's inhabitants are very loth to lose him." But this city, whose manners and customs were always somewhat strange to him, at whose weekly marts he saw Jewish and Sarmatian faces, and heard the Polish tongue, could not attract him long. The old home-sickness came back with added strength; he sought renewal of his Leipzig ties. Here the Weimar troupe had been engaged for awhile, in place of the Seconda; but the latter had now returned again, while the enterprising impresario had secured the title of "Royal Saxon Court-Players" for himself and company, despite its remaining a purely private undertaking. Through the influence of his Leipzig friends, and Franz Seconda's complaisance, Geyer obtained a temporary engagement for the coming Michaelmas. He left Breslau as early as July, for a personal interview with his new Leipzig patron, the "little doubled-up old man, of the terribly thick head and protuberant glassy eyes," as E. T. A. Hoffmann describes Seconda. Still with his buckle-shoes and knee-breeches, his pigtail and powdered perruque, he struck Weber and Genast a few years later as the ghost of a long-buried past. "The intimate of lackeys and ladies-in-waiting; servile or rude, according to the favour in which you stood at court; the type of a subaltern office-bearer of those days, he passed for a man of some tolerable influence."

After so long a parting, Geyer was rejoiced to meet his Saxon friends once more. Much had altered in his five years of absence, since the fatal peace concluded by Saxony with the insolent conqueror. Jurisdiction alike and administration had been transformed into a thorough despotism; the *Code Napoléon* had become the book of civil law. Actuary Wagner was among the few local officials who had sufficient mastery of the foreign tongue to act as intermediaries between the town-authorities and the French staff; he was therefore entrusted by Marshal Davoust, Commander of Leipzig, with the reorganisation of the legal system, and made provisional Chief of the "Police of Public Safety": with the instinct of a Napoleonic general the dreaded Commander had recognised the advantages to be drawn from employing such a man. Years after, F. Wagner's

voluminous copy of the *Code* is mentioned—as no longer of use—in a letter of Adolf to Albert Wagner concerning an inventory of the father's library.

Many an extra load had thus been laid on Wagner's back, and not without visible effect; but his welcome to the wanderer was none the less cordial. Geyer's first public appearance in Leipzig, as Philipp von Montenach in Kotzebue's "Johanna von Montfaucon," was attended by the desired success. In an account dated Oct. 6, 1809, we read: "He has greatly pleased, and will be an acquisition to any theatre, as he possesses distinguished talents suitable for a number of parts." The result of this good impression was his definite entrance into the Seconda company, and with it into the sphere of action to which he remained true to the end. Then, as before, they played at Leipzig till the autumn, and spent the winter at Dresden; at the latter city in Feb. 1810 they lost a most eminent member, the talented Opitz, whose portrait was engraved on copper after a capital likeness by Geyer.* Geyer's manysidedness was now invoked to fill the place of the deceased, whose forte had been cavaliers and ardent lovers, such as Tellheim and Fiesco, and heroic parts like Wallenstein; so that he was driven once more to a line not quite his own. He distinguished himself as Hamlet and Max Piccolomoni; but his real ability not seldom came out in lesser rôles, where his knowledge of portrait-painting would help him to the ingenious devising of a 'masque.' Thus in a report on an altogether insignificant farce, "Der Schauspieler wider Willen," we find him praised for his "marvellous versatility in the various disguises which the part entails. He varied the different characters, alike in appearance and bearing, voice and delivery, to such a degree that the audience was left in serious doubt as to the actor's identity" (*Ztg f. d. elegante Welt*, March 9, 1810).

During this winter at Dresden he had ample opportunity of observing the heartless parade of the titled world in that period of subjection to foreign rule. Immediately after the battle of Jena, Napoleon had declared that he had no quarrel with

* In collections and catalogues of portraits, this engraving (by Arndt) is still to be met with. When E. T. A. Hoffmann visited Seconda's office at Dresden in 1813 he found Signor Franz's cabinet adorned with likenesses of Opitz, Ochsenheimer, Thering, etc., "all very well painted in oils." Hoffmann, a talented draughtsman and painter himself, had the keen eye of a connoisseur, and beyond doubt the portraits he approved were from Geyer's hand.

Saxony: the Elector Friedrich August had become *King*, joined the Rhine League, and been forced to share in the war against Prussia. At the time of Germany's deepest humbling, while Prussia lay crushed beneath the Peace of Tilsit, the festivities at the Saxon court formed an unbroken chain with those at the houses of ministers, ambassadors and peers, more especially of Cabinet-minister Senft of Pilsach and the Austrian envoy, Prince Esterhazy; pomp and pleasure outvied each other in a riot of luxury and feasting. Particularly was this the case each time Napoleon stayed at Dresden. Shameless was the adulation of the foreign tyrant. At a pageant arranged in his honour, between the lofty columns of a temple stood altars with the names of Cæsar, Alexander, Miltiades, Scipio and Achilles; to strains of music an Italian singer, dressed as Fame, inscribed in flaming colours on an unnamed altar in their midst the name "Napoleon"; a brilliant light was flashed upon the letters, and at the same moment the names of the ancient heroes vanished. "Of Dresden's wretchedness you have no conception," writes Geyer in a letter to his Leipzig friends; "people here have no heart left to live, yet go in daily dread of death, though they could really do nothing more agreeable than to die. For myself, I should like to be a marmot, at least for this winter; but I have resolved to fight with might and main against this world-irony whose fools we are, and if it is a proof of worldliness to grin and bear it, I shall make free to give my face a pleasant smile, to boot, which ought to suit me admirably."

There was more enjoyment in the shift to Leipzig from Easter to Michaelmas of every year. The old house on the Brühl received him as an almost daily guest. Two flights of dark and narrow stairs led up from the dim entrance-hall to the none too roomy, yet sufficient dwelling of the Leipzig Gerichtsaktuar and provisional Chief of Police. Without the means for ostentatious patronage, Wagner had something better to offer the buffeted man: a house and home where he was always welcome, and many a valuable hint for his artistic development. Their evening chats, as Avenarius tells us, would last so long that it was quite late at night before the older friend could return to his official papers. For the first time, after all the chance and changes of his homeless life, the wanderer had found the comfort of a family circle. By side of the open-hearted, well-read husband stood his

cheery spouse, Johanna Wagner, just turned thirty; a capital housewife, full of spirit and natural feeling, untouched by any false pretence to literary or æsthetic culture. An oil-portrait from Geyer's hand shews her in the full bloom of youth, with finely-moulded features, eyes ready at each instant for a friendly jest; the jaunty cap with band beneath the chin, her favourite wear, so admirably setting off the perfect oval of her face. Of the children, Albert was now at the Royal school at Meissen; the eldest daughter, Rosalie, not ten years old, was growing up to maiden charm; below her ranged a sturdy troop of youngsters, Julius in his eighth year, the lively Louisa in her seventh, and so on. Here Geyer felt himself no interloper, but a friend and comrade prized and understood as rising artist. As he wrote after one of these Leipzig sojourns, "The company of faithful friends, their hearty sympathy in joy and sorrow, their fond endurance, constitute one of the highest blessings in life." Who could dream how near was the shipwreck of this household happiness itself, that the longed-for end of political thraldom would coincide with the impending collapse of this peaceful home?

FIRST BOOK.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

(1813-1833.)

Ich liebte glühend meine hohe Braut,
Seit ich zum Denken, Fühlen bin erwacht,
Seit mir, was einstens ihre Grösse war,
Erzählte der alten Ruinen Pracht.

Mein Leben weihte ich einzig nur ihr,
Ihr meine Jugend, meine Manneskraft;
Denn sehen wollt' ich sie, die hohe Braut,
Gekrönt als Königin der Welt!

(RIENZI, act v. sc. 2.)

I.

THE YEAR 1813.

The King of Prussia's call to arms and Germany's uprising.—Birth of Richard Wagner.—E. T. A. Hoffmann at Leipzig.—Geyer at Dresden and Teplitz.—The October-days: "Napoleon without a hat."—Friedrich Wagner's death.—Jean Paul's prophecy.

> *When German princes were no longer merely servants to French culture, but vassals to French despotism, then was the German Stripling's aid invoked, to prove with weapons in his hand the mettle of the German Spirit reborn in him. To the sound of Lyre and Sword he fought its battles. Amazed, the Gallic Cæsar asked why he no longer could beat the Cossacks and Croats, the Imperial and Royal Guards?*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

Da er mich zeugt' und starb — —

(TRISTAN, act iii.)

ON the broad snowfields of Russia, in the ravenous flames of Moscow, the swing of a mighty pendulum was bringing round the Year of Liberation. The tidings of the rout of the Grand Army, of the ruinous retreat over the Berezina, the Emperor's sledge-flight from Warsaw viâ Dresden to Paris, — the news spread from mouth to mouth, from land to land; the down-trod everywhere took heart. True, after a few more months the mighty man stood again at the head of a host of two hundred thousand; but circumstances had entirely altered: the all-dreaded no longer could rank as invincible. The Prussian King's appeal "To my Folk" filled every heart with inspiration; death-daring, the flower of German youth assembled beneath the flag of Lützow's corps; even stay-at-home greybeards armed for the "Landsturm."

In February, while Geyer was still with the Seconda troupe at Dresden, Friedrich August had to flee alike his palace and his

land; a Commission of Regency was appointed. Four weeks later the united forces of Prussia and Russia trooped into the city under Blücher and Wittgenstein; trim Prussian volunteers and bearded Cossacks poured through the Old Market; the inhabitants scarce knew if they were greeting friend or foe. Barely a week after the "Baptism in blood" of the new-born German army at Möckern, the fourteen-year-old Albert Wagner, then in the third class of the Meissen Royal-school, was confirmed at the church in the Friedrichstadt (Dresden) on April 11 in the presence of Geyer, who meant to conduct him to his parents at Easter. But the incalculable tide of war changed everything: the company was forbidden to take its yearly trip to Leipzig, and Geyer not only had to forgo the prospect of seeing his friends once more, but also to go short of a third of his salary. On the 26th of April the sovereign allies, King Friedrich Wilhelm and the Czar Alexander, made their entry into Dresden; that evening the Court-theatre gave "Minna von Barnhelm, or the Soldier's Fortune," Geyer playing the part of the landlord "with every cunning artifice of mien and gesture." Meantime Napoleon had got his fresh army together, and while the Russian main body was advancing but slowly, and Prussia still busy equipping its "Landwehr," the battle of Lützen made him master of Saxony once more. The "soldier's fortune" had not come true; yet the eyes of all Europe were centred on this Saxon land, for here the decisive struggle must soon come to grip.

Thus stood affairs at sunrise on the 22nd of May, when the youngest son of Police-actuary Wagner greeted the light of this turbulent world with his earliest cry, in the house of the White and Red Lion on the Brühl at Leipzig. The cannon thunder of the two preceding days had scarcely rolled away from the field of Bautzen: Napoleon had been left with a barren victory, a loss of 25,000 in killed and wounded, and neither prisoners nor field-guns taken. Just as little had he been able to prevent the Allies, whose loss was scarcely half so great, from withdrawing to Silesia in good order. He marched after them indeed, but his each attack miscarried, and again he suffered serious losses; thus on the evening of May 22 he lost his faithful friend, Grand Marshal Duroc, struck by a cannon-ball. The following day was a *Sunday*; on this Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock a remarkable man came from Dresden "on a comedian's adventure" right through the

swirl of war, with a wife severely injured in a postchaise accident, —through the gates of what had become the town of Richard Wagner's birth, since the day before, came the "romanticist" E. T. A. Hoffmann. He had just been called to Dresden as musical conductor of Joseph Seconda's Italian operatic company, but looked for it in vain there. The same dislocations, that had detained Franz Seconda and his acting troupe at Dresden, had interfered with the movements of his brother's alternant opera-company; it was stranded at Leipzig, and its new conductor must go there after it. On the morning of the 24th, the day after his arrival, Hoffmann held his first pianoforte-rehearsal, the next day the first band-rehearsal of a new opera, and became installed as conductor of a theatre quite strange to him. To be sure, the Leipzig operatic enterprise could make but little headway in those days of storm; the theatre was nearly empty, sometimes unusable at all, for Alarm would often be drummed just before opening time and the doors must be barred. So the manager saw himself compelled to beg leave to return to Dresden, and four weeks later Hoffmann was rumbling his way back to the capital.*

In the meantime, after concluding a truce of several weeks, Napoleon also had made his entry into the Saxon capital, and taken up his residence in the palace of Count Marcolini in the Friedrichstadt. Once again Dresden became the scene of reckless gaiety. Besides Joseph Seconda's Italian Opera, the actors of the Théâtre Français had been summoned hither,

* Hoffmann gives us a most animated account of these Leipzig days, on one of which, "relying on his swiftness of foot," he had even witnessed a skirmish at close quarters: "It was the affair that took place on June the seventh at 9 A.M. hard by the gates of Leipzig. The next day Herr Seconda coolly declared that he must close the theatre, and we all might be off where we would. This came on us as a bolt from the blue; every representation was in vain, even the offer of a loan of 1000 reichsthalers by a tradesman friend of our buffo Keller, a man much liked at Leipzig,—Seconda was inflexible. So the company put their heads together, and decided, after reducing the expenses as much as possible, to play for at least a fortnight on their own account, leaving Herr Seconda to keep the books. The Leipzig Town-council was so obliging as not only to raise no obstacles, but considerably to reduce the rent of the house. Fortune favoured us; our two operas, *Sargines* and *Figaro*, the very reverse of new, but excellently performed and vociferously applauded, we were able to give three times apiece to full houses. We were already preparing an extension of our programme, and boldly

among them Napoleon's special favourite, the far-famed Talma, and the much-prized Mme. Georges*; during the truce they divided their favours between the Court-theatre and a private stage improvised for the Court proper in the orangery of the Marcolini palace. As this meant a double provision for the theatric entertainment of the capital, Geyer's summer outlook was poor indeed. The wisdom of the Director, rejecting Leipzig, had decided that the company should go to Teplitz in Bohemia, still at peace. "The journey to Leipzig would have delighted me; Teplitz is indifferent to me, I might almost say distasteful," writes Geyer to his friends on June the 6th, "but the hope of spending the last months of summer at Leipzig shall conquer my revolt. In no summer have I so yearned for Leipzig as in this one, when it is only from a distance that I am permitted to take part in its summer diversions at pleasant Stötteritz,—think of me at times there, as I shall think of my beloved Leipzig when I climb the hills of Teplitz." He goes on to say that the truce just proclaimed gives hope of peace indeed, but, as usual, a peace of such a nature that another war lies hidden in its clauses. "Napoleon has promised to convert Saxony into a paradise; the prospect is truly excellent, for we are already reduced to our shirts, and its fulfilment will restore us altogether to a state of innocence."

In the delightful highland nest of Stötteritz, not far from the Thonberg, and close to the base of operations of the approaching Leipzig battle, little Richard—still nameless, since still unnamed!

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thinking of getting up the *Vestalin*, when Herr Seconda's star most unexpectedly began to rise. Through the intervention of his brother Franz he had received permission to play at the Court-theatre in Dresden; so he naturally resumed the helm, and on June 24 we took our departure in nine vanloads,—an amusing journey that would afford me matter for the most comical tale. In particular a Hamburg charabanc, containing the lower staff, offered such a spectacle that I never failed to be present at its loading and unloading. On a careful computation it held the following: a stage-hairdresser, two scene-shifters, five maids; nine children, of whom two newly born and three still sucking; a parrot that swore unceasingly and to the point; five dogs, among them three decrepit pugs; four guinea-pigs, and a squirrel."

* See C. W. Böttiger's *Geschichte des Königreichs Sachsen*, II. 252: "Talma, Fleury, Mmes. Mars and Georges, had arrived for the French play in Dresden; talents to which Friedrich August had moreover to pay 1000 ducats travelling-money." In 1841 we hear of Mme. Mars in R. Wagner's "Correspondence from Paris" (*P. W.* VIII. 119).

—passed a portion of his first month of life. Here Friedrich Wagner completed in mid-June his forty-third year, full of life and vigour, without one premonition that it was to be his *last*. Geyer had proposed a summer-trip to Teplitz, such as his friend would seem to have been fond of taking with his wife; instead of that, Wagner soon had cause to hasten his own return to Leipzig. Napoleon was not the man for idle dalliance, and least of all at such a crisis; in July he could no longer keep quiet at Dresden: to hold a grand review he came to Leipzig, where he quartered himself on the Thomä house in the Rathhaus Place, and Jungfer Jeannette again had to put up a royal guest in the state-apartments last tenanted (1809) by Ex-King Jerôme of Westphalia.

On August 15 the truce expired. For Geyer it had the disagreeable sequel, that next day all strangers in Teplitz received strict orders to cross the frontier within forty-eight hours. With the rest of the company he had to leave Bohemia, sent back once more to Dresden.

The same day, Monday the 16th August, there was a christening in St. Thomas's church at Leipzig, under Deacon Mag. Eulenstein; delayed by various causes in that year of war, at last the name of *Wilhelm Richard Wagner* was given to the delicate but well-proportioned child. The godparents, according to the parish archives (which also contain the "declaration of birth" in the father's handwriting), were Dr Wilhelm Wiesand, advocate of the Higher Court and Consistory; tradesman Adolf Träger; Jungfrau Juliane Henriette Schöffelin, orphan daughter of the late tradesman Heinrich Gottlob Schöffel (subsequently Frau Hofräthin B. of Stuttgart)—owing to illness, her place on this occasion was filled by Jgfr. Johanna Henriette Louise Mohl. Five years later Dr Wiesand was entrusted by Arthur Schopenhauer, who had fallen out with his publisher Brockhaus on the eve of a journey to Italy, with the as yet unprinted final third of the manuscript of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, together with full authority to recover the stipulated fee. The Träger family is repeatedly mentioned in the letters of Geyer and Adolf Wagner; for Träger himself Geyer had painted a portrait of the actor Christ during his stay at Leipzig.

And so the rite through whose postponement Richard's Christianity fell three months short of his Germanity came at the very beginning of the renewal of bloodshed. On August 22 the

cannons on the walls proclaimed the victory just won by Bonaparte at Löwenberg in Silesia; a few days later he won his last, near Dresden. Prussians and Austrians retired with jeopardy to Teplitz, so lately left by Geyer and his colleagues. At the same time the army of Macdonald was beaten and dispersed by Blücher at Katzbach. On September 19 Richard's mother kept her five-and-thirtieth birthday: the decisive blow was near at hand.

Every preparation for the final battle had been made, when the King of Saxony arrived at Leipzig on the 13th of October, and alighted at the Thomä house. The Allies invested the city; at eight in the morning of the 16th over a thousand cannons were belching thunder, shattering all the windows in the town. At three in the afternoon Napoleon's runners came in with news of victory; the bells in every steeple were set ringing. The following day, a Sunday, was a day of rest; the victor's peace-proposals were not so much as honoured with an answer. Thus on Monday the 18th, again at 8 A.M., commenced the last murderous bout: half-way through the engagement the Saxons went over to the Allies; by evening the French had been driven back to close beneath the city's gates. On Tuesday the suburbs were bombarded, alarms of fire set the Brühl in commotion. About 10 o'clock Napoleon left the city, after bidding farewell to Friedrich August. Richard's mother would often tell the growing boy how the emperor fled hat-less down the Brühl that day, under the very windows of the White and Red Lion where *he* was lying in his cradle. At midday—entry of the Allied Sovereigns; from every window white flags waving to them. The King, who had plunged his country into the deepest misery through his crass dependence on the foreign tyrant, was made a prisoner of state; in the same apartments of the Thomä house, which had lately formed his royal lodging, the Russian Prince Repnin took his provisional seat as Governor General of Saxony until the occupation of Dresden.

By Richard's cradle his mother had trembled for the fate of their fatherland, and now she cried for joy at its salvation. But Friedrich Wagner had sterner work before him. The aspect of the town was terrible: the avenues hewn down, the promenades laid waste, outlying houses demolished; at every step in the outer city one trod on dead bodies of men or horses. The spectacle of devastation is preserved to us in a well-known woodcut of the view around the Rannstadt Gate in those eventful days of October.

The fatal consequences of preceding panic and the accumulation of dead and wounded round the walls, nay, within the city's very streets and squares, were not slow to present themselves. An epidemic nervous fever (hospital-typhus) took toll of the inhabitants, among them Friedrich Wagner. Worn out by incessant exertions, he was snatched from the bosom of his family on the 22nd of November, after a few days' illness, in the full vigour of life.

Richard's half-year birthday was the death-day of his father.

We need not dwell upon the mother's grief at this calamity. Acute was her anxiety about the maintenance of her young family, for Friedrich's sudden death had left his dear ones with no assured provision. However, there was no lack of sympathetic friends to smooth the earliest difficulties. It would appear that Geyer rushed over from Dresden, to help bury his friend and comfort the mourner. Arrangements were soon made for bringing up the children; Albert remained at his Meissen school, Rosalie was entrusted to a Dresden lady-friend of Geyer's, Louise was adopted by Frau Hartwig, under whose motherly care she completed her eighth year of life on the 14th December at Dresden. In a letter of the 22nd, Geyer gives the mother an account of the presents and preparations for the two Dresden children's Christmas, and begs her to light a fine tree for the "Cossack" (Richard), whom he "so gladly would dandle awhile on the sofa." As for himself, he says he is living "buried like a badger, pacing his lonely room, and at the utmost slipping round to Frau Hartwig's to see how the foster-daughter is doing."

In the same Leipzig in which Johanna Wagner was troubling for the weal of Richard and his brothers and sisters, at the Golden Heart in the Fleischerstrasse on New Year's Eve Hoffmann, but lately returned there, completed the manuscript of his fantastic masterpiece, the tale of the "Golden Pot." It was intended for printing with the "Phantasiestücken in Callot's Manier," to which Jean Paul had written on November 24 (two days after Friedrich Wagner's death) a preface containing the prophecy—in reality aimed at Hoffmann: "Hitherto the Sun-god has cast the gift of poetry with his right hand, of music with his left, to two such widely-distant beings that we still are waiting for the man who shall both write and set the poem of a genuine opera."

Strange that this presage should have come from *Bayreuth* in the natal year of the Bayreuth master!

II.

REMOVAL TO DRESDEN.

Fresh troubles.—Geyer weds the widow.—Removal to Dresden. —Dresden's pigtailery.—Company at Geyer's house: puppet-plays and comedies.—Débuts of Louise and Rosalie.—Richard's infancy.

> *All paltry calculation was silenced by trust in God and his talent, when he gave his hand to the wholly impecunious widow of a friend proved true to death, and thus became the father of seven orphans.*
>
> K. A. BÖTTIGER (Geyer's necrologue).

WITH the bitter loss that year of great events had brought her, the time of trial for the sorrowing mother was not yet over. Towards its end, the oldest son fell likewise sick of nervous fever; and Richard's health was ominously feeble. She came near to sink beneath the load; but Geyer's faithful voice revived her from afar: "Pluck up heart, and, however fiercely Fate assails you, don't dwell too much on trouble; remember that you still have pressing duties in the world, that you are a *mother* and your children need you." His New Year's greeting announced that the Dresden children were well: "May Albert and Richard soon be also." Yet there was to be many a night of anxious vigil, ere the state of the first-born took a turn for the better. Then on the 26th of January 1814 came the death of the grandmother Johanna Sophia (née Eichel) at the age of all but seventy,—the last link, for the present, in a long chain of misfortunes.

For the recuperation of the much-tried mother a brief trip to Dresden next was planned. The yellow Saxon coach that plied between Leipzig and the capital brought her safely to her destination; again she saw her absent children, and found them thriving. But something else was settled between her and the trusty friend: in Geyer's honest heart a most worthy resolve had

been forming in the months since the death of his lamented comrade; it ripened now to clearness, and the widow quietly became his wife. After a little while she returned to Leipzig, whither he followed her about Easter with good news of a change in his fortunes: the Seconda troupe was about to convert its precarious toleration into a guaranteed engagement by the State, under favourable conditions.* With this encouraging assurance of his future livelihood was coupled the agreeable prospect of the company's nomadic roaming between Dresden and Leipzig soon drawing to an end. The latter, indeed, was not to be for a year or two yet; only in the year 1816 did the Royal Court-players come to Leipzig for their last Easter term; on the 20th October of that year they said good-bye to it for ever with a performance of Lessing's "Emilia" in which Geyer played Marinelli and Frau Hartwig the Orsina; at its close this able actress spoke the farewell epilogue.

Meanwhile the family's removal to Dresden had already taken place; once more it was a settled home in which the little Richard struggled up. Brother Albert was just about to leave his Meissen school and attend the university for the study of medicine; sister Louise still remained in the loving care of her foster-mother, who would not relinquish her charge so soon; Rosalie, on the other hand, had returned to her parents immediately after they settled in Dresden; of the others, Therese had succumbed to an illness at the age of five, but her place had been filled by a little dark-haired daughter, Augusta Cäcilie (born Feb. 26, 1815), the only fruit of Richard's mother's second marriage.

Their dwelling lay in the Moritz-strasse, the corner-house next the passage through the Landhaus to the present Landhaus-strasse. Geyer was not overburdened with professional work now that his

* It was a bad affair, though, for poor Franz Seconda. In the first place he had the personal misfortune to be taken for a French spy on the very day of his company's arrival at Leipzig, and to be dragged before the Russian Governor Prince Repnin; he had a narrow escape from death by shooting, and was sent to the Dresden police-court under military arrest. Not till five days later, and after his case had been twice heard, was he set at liberty. Then, through the incorporation of his acting-troupe with the Italian Opera as a state-establishment, he was completely dethroned and his contract annulled, though it still had several years to run. In the event, under Theodor Hell as temporary Intendant, he obtained a modest provision for his declining years as business-adviser of the full-fledged Court-theatre.

engagement as actor had been restricted to Dresden; with a salary of 1040 thalers (about £156), he mostly had to appear but twice a week, and in frequently recurring rôles. Nevertheless it needed unflagging industry, to provide for the support and education of a growing family; so he diligently devoted all his leisure to portrait-painting, and his studio was often quite full of would-be sitters. His energy was great, and his health more promising than ever; the happiness of domestic life had increased the natural cheerfulness of his temper.

For the rest, the state of the Saxon capital was little calculated to inspire so vivacious an artistic nature as Geyer's. After the return of its legitimate king (June 7, 1815) the Dresden of those days remained as if there had never been a War of Liberation; a veritable colony of "Hofraths from first class to fourth," in the heyday of its pigtail-age. Among Cäcilie's godparents we find a "Counsellor" (Hofrath Theodor Hell, whom we shall meet again), a "Court-painter" (Georg Friedr. Winkler), and a "Court-player" (Friedrich Canow). Everything emanated from the "Court," and as of old its order of the day was suffocation of each breath of true Germanity in life and art. Even as regards the confession of faith, every person attached to the court or standing in the remotest relation to it, from the Hofmarschall and Master of the Ceremonies down to the Court turnspit and scullery-maid, was expected to share in the Royal family's adhesion to the Roman Church. A sickly note of sugar was the distinctive mark of Dresden's literary lions, at their head the polymorphic scribbler who went by the pen-name of "Theodor Hell," the noted Hofrath Winkler, so busy as adaptor and translator, critic, prefacer and editor, manager of the Italian Opera, Mæcenas and adviser to a swarm of minor spirits, factotum of sundry clubs and unions,—surpassing all the beaux esprits of Dresden in virtue of an ugliness that had moved Tieck to depict him in his Puss-in-boots as a scare-crow of burnt leather. Around him the ever "unrecognised," but all the more self-conscious poet, Friedrich Kind, and a whole troop of sentimental novelists and saccharine lyrists who had made Hell's *Abendzeitung* their head-quarters. Richard Wagner's subsequent characterisation of this epoch as "quite openly avowing itself a paper one" is fully borne out by other accounts of the extraordinary bibliomania then raging in Dresden; the whole city *read*, and "even the red-coated Grenadiers, with their legs hanging out of

the palace windows, had a novel on their lap as they knitted stockings." *

The nimbus round the King and Court attached to their lowest dependent; thus it happened (according to M.M. v. Weber) that an excellent chamber-musician—subsequently Weber's valiant friend—was particularly prized because his brother was a Royal valet! Soft speech, respectful manners, distinguished the Dresdener; at the theatre itself one feared to shew approval by noisy demonstration. Concerning a performance of Geyer's as Jefferies in Zeigler's "Parteienwuth," when he was loudly called before the curtain despite the public's naïve detestation of the rôle of villain, we read in the *Freimüthige* of Feb. 6, 1816: "To have roused our public to *such* a pitch, is saying a good deal, and could have only occurred on a Sunday; on weekdays, when the Court honours the house with its presence, it is not considered seemly to behave like that, as the King objects to demonstrations."

With Geyer "Art was earnest, life a sport, so long as life ran lusty in his veins," as Böttiger puts it in his Necrologue (Dresden *Abendzeitung*, Nos. 259-60, 1821). His hospitable home in the Moritz-strasse was ever a favourite meeting-place for merry spirits, himself the life and soul of every party. To this sociable circle belonged, among others, the jovial War-counsellor Georgi, chief friend of the house, recollection of whom was preserved by Richard Wagner to the end; the versatile Ferdinand Heine, at first a bandsman in the Dresden Hofkapelle, thereafter one of the Royal Players, devoted to the family from first to last, and especially to Richard from his childhood up; Geyer's colleagues, Christ and Haffner, both veterans from the old Seconda days; the hero-player Fr. Julius, Geyer's former comrade at Breslau, whose time-honoured Tellheim and Romeo eventually won the unstinted praise of Tieck himself. Then we have Frau Hartwig, with the elasticity of youth so well conserved that at the age of forty she was able to personate a girl of sixteen with all due freshness and vivacity. It certainly was hard on her that short-sighted Herr Böttiger, Dresden's loquacious art-critic and archæologic authority, should have presented her on her birthday, as symbol of her never-aging youth, with a rose whose petals he had stripped away in the fervour of oratory; she was equal to the occasion, however, and replied that at last she realised how blind love makes.

* F. Pecht, in his sketch of *Gottfried Semper*.

In this lively circle the family-feasts at Geyer's house not seldom took the form of puppet-shows, or even full-fledged dramatic representations, in which he had arranged the whole himself, from verse to costumes. Thus arose full many a bright occasional product of his fancy, spiced with witty allusions to local topics and celebrities. Among these fugitive compositions, a number of which have been preserved to this day, belongs his satirical comedy—originally a puppet-play—"Die neue Delila," * in which Richard Wagner (speaking in 1878) remembered having seen the shepherds Dämot and Philemon played by Geyer himself and Kriegsrath Georgi. "His crams are worse than Bösenberg's of Dräsen," Geyer makes the shepherd Dämot say of the Viking braggadocio Sigurd Rottenbrecher, alluding to his colleague the irrepressible low-comedian Bösenberg, born in 1750, who celebrated his jubilee as actor soon after the commencement of the new Dresden era, and was noted for the Münchausenesque reminiscences which he retailed for the benefit of the green-room. Ample matter for his fanciful skits was afforded by the Fate-Tragedy ("König Ygurd," "Die Ahnfrau," etc.) then prevalent at the Play, and at the Opera the court's affection for Rossini's *Gazza Ladra* (*Germanicé* "die diebische Elster") and *Tancredi*, in which last the celebrated male soprano Sassaroli sang the title-part and Signora Sandrini the part of Amenaide. The pushing maëstro he treats as follows:

> Rossini! ruft die Welt—Rossini, nie, nie, nie
> Kommt wieder solch Genie: *di tanti palpiti*
> Hat ihn berühmt gemacht, muss ihn unsterblich machen.
> Rossini ringt, auch wenn der Erde Pfosten krachen,
> Die "Elster" in der Hand, kühn mit dem Weltensturz—
> Und was den Lärm betrifft, da kommt er nicht zu kurz.

Ere long the opportunity of turning his poetic gift to some practical use was furnished by the débuts of his step-daughters Louise and Rosalie. A friendly rivalry existed between Frau Hartwig as foster-mother of the first-named, and Geyer as foster-father of the second; but the man was against their making too

* It was printed twice, but not till after Geyer's death: first in 8vo, "The new Dalilah, a pastoral and heroic play, merry at the beginning, but most tragic toward the end," Leipzig 1823; and secondly in 16mo, in a continuation of the "Kotzebue-almanac of dramatic pieces for the entertainment of country-houses," 21st year of issue, Leipzig, P. G. Kummer.

early a public appearance. In the case of Rosalie, it had been the expressed wish of her father Friedrich Wagner that she should enter the career of a player, with the proviso that she was not to tread the boards before her fifteenth or sixteenth year; it was for this reason that Geyer had declined to trust her education to his valued lady friend, as he feared a contravention of the limit. In the case of Louise, he had been powerless to prevent her appearing in a tiny child-rôle in a one-act comedy even at the premature age of ten, but at least he claimed the privilege of writing a suitable piece for her next appearance in the following year: a comedy in rhymed alexandrines entitled "Das Mädchen aus der Fremde,"* given out under the assumed name of E. Willig. He himself played a part in it, with great success; by his side Louise enacted the rôle of a girl of ten years old, to general satisfaction. For Rosalie's first appearance Geyer waited out the term appointed by her father. In the charming piece he wrote for her, "Das Erntefest," her rôle is named after herself, and Geyer's own fatherly love to the winsome fledgeling finds full expression.† This time his real name was announced on the programme, but he did not play a part; the principal characters were sustained by his colleagues Julius, Burmeister, and Frau Hartwig. The reception by public and critics was most friendly and sympathetic; due in part to the author's popularity, in part to the charm of the youthful débutante.

Rosalie's début took place on the 2nd of May 1818; two days later she entered her sixteenth year. In her uncle Adolf's letter,

* It was under this title that the piece was first performed at Dresden on May 11, 1817, though it is also cited as "Braut aus der Fremde" in the Dresden *Abendzeitung* of Oct. 30, the same year. The plot of the innocent two-act play is briefly as follows: A young officer picks up a little girl of ten years old from the field of battle, and teases his betrothed by writing her, without further particulars, that he has a maiden always with him whom he loves and kisses etc. Thereupon the father of the bride-elect challenges the father of the officer to a duel, but all ends happily after the necessary explanations. The subsidiary characters are also well drawn: a pretender to the fiancée's hand, whose name of Baron von Hopfensack denotes his rustic style and manners; a spiteful stepmother, who rules the good-natured father in his own house; the officer's trooper servant, and so on.

† This piece also is mentioned under a different title, "Der Erntekranz"; but it was performed, and printed, (in the Kotzebue Almanac for 1822), under that quoted above. As the work is out of print, and rare, we give a summary of it as well. Count Werben had wedded Therese; in his absence his proud

conveying his birthday wishes, we find them accompanied by the hope that "the life of show and dissembling which she has chosen, or rather found, may not cheat her of her veritable treasure, a pure and humble heart, full of modesty, love and piety." To understand this solemn warning amidst all the preparations for Rosalie's future, we must recall Adolf's rooted dislike of the stage as a profession. Almost predestined for the theatre by Friedrich Wagner's predilection, the growing family had been brought into somewhat too close a contact with its perilous attractions through Geyer's direct connection. In this sense the uncle brother-in-law had looked askance at the widow's second marriage; nay, his advice, if asked, would have been dead against it, however much he valued Geyer as man and artist. Against the *daughters'* training for the stage he had openly protested from the first. "With any deeper glance into this calling," he was wont to say, "I cannot but consider a life devoted to it as thrown away. Whoever knows the actor's life at all, does not need much telling how it burns a man out, makes him shallow and empty; how it leads to so-called fortunes and adventures, too insignificant to mend the manners of a male, but serious enough in any case to mar the manners of a *female*. The whirl and scurry of the outer life, alike with the mendacious juggling of the inner, form too sharp a contrast, too severe a strain, not to derange at once and dislocate a woman's nature." Indeed Geyer's own opinion of his calling was not so very different, for he once described it as a career that "he would gladly abandon any day, as it robbed

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mother had got the marriage set aside, and Therese had departed with her hope and sorrow. Werben has been unable to trace her until, despatched as envoy to a foreign land, he believes he recognises the features of his long-lost wife in a girl of fourteen years—Rosalie—whom he meets there. His joy is crushed by information that the girl is daughter of an "Oekonomierath" Ehrenberg, for he can but imagine that his wife must have contracted a second union. Yet he is conquered by the longing to see his beloved once again, and he decides to accompany the child to her parents, to disclose his story to the husband, and implore him to yield Therese to him. Rosalie is not the child of Ehrenberg; the Count's heart has not deceived him. Ehrenberg's wife had lost their own daughter in his absence, and, dreading to grieve him by the news on his return, had adopted Rosalie, the daughter of Therese, retaining the mother as companion. The knot is unravelled by the confession of Frau Ehrenberg, and, the Count purchasing the adjoining property, both families resolve to live together. All this takes place on the day of Harvest-home, whose festival concludes the piece.

him of all quiet, joy and health"; and it was with no light heart that he let his foster-children brave its dangers. Thus it was not by his advice, that Albert also left his medical studies to become a singer; "facility, forgive me for saying it, has prompted your choice of this calling," he writes, and warns him in no uncertain tones of the "torrent of comedianism." The younger brother Julius he apprenticed to his own unmarried younger brother, goldsmith Geyer at Eisleben; but he had eventually to see a third daughter, Clara Wagner (born 1807), follow her natural inclination and the example of both her elder sisters.

At least the youngest children, Ottilie, Richard and Cäcilie, were to abide by their parents' wish, and keep off the boards. Little *Richard* was the special object of alike his mother's and his stepfather's affection. His delicate constitution required peculiar care, for he was already troubled with that irritating form of erysipelas (? erythema, or eczema) which recurred at frequent intervals throughout his life. However, it was not merely the child's weak health that drew especial interest to him, but also his surprising gift of observation, and comical comparisons, by far beyond the usual limits of his age. Down to his sixth year he had no regular lessons; the mother wished to give him time to pick up strength, and would not have him plagued with school-work; yet his sisters taught him this and that at home, besides what he learnt in the disguise of play from stepfather and watchful mother. Neither at this time, nor in the next few years, did he exhibit any symptoms of the "infant prodigy"; but his relatives have preserved so vivid a recollection of certain trifling escapades, that one can only conclude he must have had an individuality of his own even in earliest childhood.

A pale, slim little chap in short-armed frocks, but unruly enough already—thus these traditions shew the tiny Richard. On his errands to grocer Klepperbein he has a trick of forgetting his message in the delight of the largesse of raisins. He is fond of following his mother into the kitchen: just as the cutlets are frying most temptingly, she has to answer the door to a visitor; on her return she finds an empty pan, and Richard scuttling off with queer contortions. Upon examination, the cause of distress turns out to be a steaming cutlet in his breeches-pocket,—what has become of the others? After a few maternal threats, con-

fession is made that they smelt so good he took a bite at each of them, but they were so very hot he couldn't finish them, and one after the other went under the hearth. Another day, to make amends, he races through the streets after a dog who has stolen the joint, and is rewarded in the market-place by a kick in his chest from a horse, the consequences of which gave much anxiety. These fleeting reminiscences of Richard's fourth and fifth years we receive through his sister Cäcilie; as she was nearly two years younger than himself, she must have had them from the older members of the family, in whose memory a thousand similar freaks of the young rascal would have lingered; a few were afterwards perpetuated by the skilful pen of his friend the painter Ernst Kietz.

III.

GEYER'S LAST YEARS.

Relations with K. M. v. Weber.—The "German Opera."—Starring at Prague and Leipzig.—Occupation as painter.—Comedy "The Slaughter of the Innocents."—Albert and Rosalie.—Failing health.—Representation of his comedy.—Journey to Breslau.—Illness and death.

> *One knew not which to give the highest praise to, his manifold artistic talent, his witty talk, or his deep feeling of love and duty. However conscious of his natural gifts and their assiduous cultivation, the ideal he strove for was so refined that he could never content himself with what he actually achieved.*
>
> K. A. BÖTTIGER on L. Geyer.

DURING Richard Wagner's earliest childhood a new and pregnant chapter in the history of art had been opened at Dresden. At the beginning of 1817 Karl Maria von Weber arrived to found a *German Opera* in the midst of pigtailed and Italianised "Elbe-Florence." Scarcely had he taken up his dwelling in a vine-clad cottage of the "Italian village," when he made his first experience of the hardships of his new position: summoned to Dresden as Kapellmeister, he was to be put off with the subordinate rank of Music-director. This so enraged him, that he threatened to leave at once if he were not placed on exactly the same footing as his colleague, Morlachi of the Italian Opera. Through his manly conduct he soon won the sympathy of his artistic comrades, but his first annoyances remained characteristic of his treatment by the Court throughout.

Soon after commencing his preliminary rehearsals, he published a manifesto in the *Abendzeitung* setting forth his aims and objects in starting this new enterprise, and appealing to the public to support him.* Support, however, was lastingly denied him in

* "The art-forms of other nations," so it runs, "have always been better defined than those of the German. The Italian and Frenchman have made

the region where it might have had the greatest influence, the Court itself: engagements made expressly for the "German Opera" were often vetoed or frowned at for the most singular reasons; a tenor, for instance, who had pleased both Weber and the public, was dismissed because his first appearance gave the King a painful impression of personal resemblance to that Privy-Councillor von Anstetten whose duty it had been to apprise him of his arrest by the Allies in fateful 1813. Barely able to extort the first necessaries for his undertaking, he saw himself compelled to fall back on the more vocal members of the Play. Thus Geyer, the lucky owner of a "by no means despicable" tenor voice,—Geyer who had begun as "hero" with Don Carlos, Piccolomini and Hamlet, and passed on to comic and character parts; Geyer, who, in addition to his painting and play-writing, was still busied with parts such as Alba in *Egmont* and Iago in *Othello*, had to become an "opera-singer" into the bargain. In recompense this brought him into much closer connection with Weber, for whom he entertained a high esteem from the first, than would otherwise have been the case. He undertook for him the parts of Lorenz in the singspiel "Das Hausgesinde," of the colour-grinder Paul in Weigl's "Adrian von Ostade," Thomas in Solié's comic opera "Das Geheimniss," and various other minor singing rôles; reminding us of the reference in Richard Wagner's *Actors and Singers* to "that highly laudable class of performers" who in days gone by won recognition in Play alike and Opera.

Fresh intrigues of Morlachi's commenced about the time of the summer representations in the little theatre at the Linke'sches Bad. The picturesque situation of this theatre, with its trifling distance from the city, made it a favourite resort for the middle classes: the Elbe flowing by, it was easy of approach, and every summer afternoon the pretty spectacle would be presented of a flotilla of pleasure-boats on their way there, while pedestrians streamed along the shady avenues by the river-side. Intent on

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themselves an operatic form in which they move with ease. Not so the German. It is his peculiarity to seize the excellence of all the rest with eager curiosity and desire for constant progress; but he *deepens* everything. Whereas the others mostly make for the sensuous zest of isolated moments, he demands an artwork rounded in itself, where every part shall join to constitute a fine ensemble, a perfect whole." It is significant to find the aims of Richard Wagner foreshadowed in almost the selfsame words by his favourite model.

lowering German Opera in the eyes of the public, Morlachi contrived to get the Italian singers dispensed from appearing on this suburban stage. Geyer had to suffer for it, and defer the cure he meant to undergo at Carlsbad; before he could obtain leave to mend his broken health, he had to make repeated extra appearances in play and singspiel. By the time he did get to Carlsbad, he found it packed with royalty and fashion; balls and assemblies were made occasion for the choicest toilets; a rainy summer filled the theatre and concert-hall. He himself could not escape the frequent call for evening entertainments, at one of which he recited Goethe's "Der Gott und die Bajadere"; but he kept as far as possible from the giddy throng, seeking recreation in walks and excursions into the beautiful surrounding country.

The same autumn took him once again across the Bohemian frontier: bearing messages from Weber to his fiancée, Caroline Brandt, engaged there as a singer, and his valued patron Count Pachta, he went on a fortnight's starring trip to Prague; whither Weber himself soon followed, on his wedding-journey, after Geyer's return. After a while he revisited Leipzig, for another star-engagement. Though this city had lost its main attraction for him, it yet remained a place of fond remembrances, and he met with many a sign of old attachment and respect. Thus we are told that a volley of applause which greeted his first appearance, as King Philip in *Don Carlos*, sent the actor's heart to his unguarded lips: for the nonce he quite forgot himself, or rather his rôle, and returned thanks to the audience in a few familiar words; after which he resumed his cue, "Thus alone, Madame?" The sarcastic stage-manager, Gottfried Wohlbrück, who never could repress a witticism, even though it stung his dearest friend, was standing as Domingo by side of the "Duke of Alba," and whispered to him, "Eh! for King Philip has just turned to Geyer." But no one could have felt the solecism more keenly than the good artist himself; the whole evening was spoilt for him, and with it his rôle.* He threw up his engagement at once,

* This account, with all its details, is borrowed from Edouard Genast's most instructive volume, *Aus dem Tagebuch eines alten Schauspielers*; contemporary reports, however, say *nothing* of either this impromptu speech of Geyer's or its effect on his impersonation, but simply tell us that "Herr Wolf as Marquis Posa, Dem. Böhler as Queen Elizabeth, Herr Geyer as King Philip, Herr Stein

not to come back till the following year, when he gave a series of most successful impersonations.

We will now turn for a moment to that other aspect of Geyer's life, his career as *painter*, of which we have as yet said so little, though many a report has come down to us, especially from the period of his permanent abode in Dresden.

At the Dresden annual art-exhibition of 1816, beside the Sigurd-compositions of Julius Schnorr (after Fouqué), Geyer's copy of an Assumption of the Virgin by Luca Giordano attracted universal notice. At a later exhibition one of the chief points of interest is said to have been his noble full-length portrait of the Queen of Saxony.* The Princess Augusta too (distinguished from the rest of the Court by her warm sympathy with Weber's efforts) sat to Geyer for a successful portrait. Commissioned by the Queen to paint her brother the King of Bavaria (Max Joseph), in the summer of 1819 he went on an eight-weeks leave to Munich, where he meant to combine a star-engagement with his studio-work. There he found "all the magazines and sheds packed full with the antiques brought over from Greece and Italy," while the imposing fabric of the Glyptothek was making daily progress under the eager eye of Crown-prince Ludwig. The King accorded him a sitting for the portrait, which proved such a speaking likeness as to cause "an indescribable sensation." He also painted the Queen, whilst orders from court-circles soon rained so thick that he was obliged to break off the theatrical engagement which he had opened with Rudolf in Körner's "Banditenbraut," and moreover to decline quite a mass of commissions owing to the expiry of his term.†

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as Don Carlos, and Mme. Wolff as Princess Eboli, received the most unmistakable proofs of general approbation; whereas the Alba—Genast—was much blamed in regard of both dress and conception."

* "The whole large picture is finely and worthily conceived, and admirably held in balance," says a report on this exhibition in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst*. "Our eyes also dwelt with pleasure on a charming portrait of the Princess Augusta."

† A Munich letter of August 25, 1819, in the *Dresd. Abendzeitung* (Nos. 221-22) tells us that, "Commanded by her Majesty the Queen of Saxony to paint the portrait of her august brother, our King, Herr Geyer was shewn one from the hand of Stieler, and remarked that the resemblance was not such as he would undertake to effect if he could but be allowed the honour of *a single sitting* of one hour's duration. His wish was fulfilled, and the King's portrait

The unusually close connection in Geyer's nature between the mimetic gift and that for painting, has often been remarked. Just as all reports on his histrionic performances make mention of his effective and appropriate make-up, so we read of his talent for reproducing features on the canvas that "the Muse of Stagecraft guided, unseen, the brush of her faithful disciple." Yet, for all his ample recognition by connoisseurs and experts, the modest artist ever failed to satisfy himself. Bitterly would he deplore the lack of thorough training in his earlier years, and ardently long for the higher incentive of Italy. This unfulfilled longing he puts into the mouth of Painter Klaus, the hero of his admirable comedy "The Slaughter of the Innocents," his ripest dramatic product.* Painter Klaus is a sterling artist, a delightful blend of enthusiasm, eccentricity, and lofty indifference to the straits of daily life. His wife has not attained this pitch of resignation to earthly discomfort: it drives her almost crazy to think that guests are arriving at midday and there isn't a sixpence in the house, though the painter recks but little of it. Yet Klaus, too, can be torn from the clouds and plunged into the blackest despair, when it concerns the destruction of the sketch for a painting on whose completion he had built all his hopes of renown. Since Goethe's

left his hands with a likeness than which nothing could be more complete. It is indescribable, the sensation this picture has made. Next he painted her Majesty the Queen, and again won the unanimous verdict of all unbiased connoisseurs. So Herr Geyer got overwhelmed with orders; and it is scarcely credible, when one hears that within six weeks he was at work on 30 portraits, among them those of the Duke Wilhelm, Field-Marshal Prince Wrede, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Count von Rechberg, with family, Chief Master of the Ceremonies Carl Count v. Rechberg, the Prussian and French ambassadors, and so on. At last, his leave of absence running out, he had to decline to execute any more. It greatly redounds to the artist's honour, to have earned this distinction in a city where men like Hauber, Kellerhofen, Ettlinger, are so famous in this branch of painting; but I am not saying too much when I assert that in point of *likeness*, at the first glance, none equals Herr Geyer. Of this rapidity of vision, this correctness of apprehension, I should scarcely have deemed any artist capable."

* The widest-known of Geyer's comedies, *Der bethlehemitische Kindermord* (with sub-title, "Dramatisch-comische Situationen aus dem Künstlerleben") did not appear in print until after his death, and then in the following editions: (1) as a separate publication, Weimar, 1823, Hoffmann; (2) in the *Weimarisches Dramatisches Taschenbuch*, first year of issue, with a portrait of Durand as "Maler Klaus"; (3) in the *Deutsche Schaubühne*, vol. xiv., Vienna 1825; (4) in Reclam's *Universalbibliothek*, No. 1979, edited by C. Fr. Wittmann, 1885.

"Künstler's Erdenwallen" the contrasts and collisions between the demands of everyday life, with household, wife and child, and the ideal aspirations of an artist's soul, have never been set forth with so much truth to nature and humorous invention.

Geyer's diligence in every department of his varied activity had been rewarded by the removal from him and his of all material hardships, such as he had once known quite as acutely as his Maler Klaus. He had also reaped the satisfaction of having brought at least the two eldest children, Albert and Rosalie, to a state of independence. With Albert, who had abandoned his medical studies for a thorough course of singing-lessons under Mieksch of Dresden, and was now to make his earliest venture on the boards, he once more went to Leipzig in the winter of 1819, where the young artist made his first appearance as Belmonte in Mozart's *Entführung*. In the spring of 1820 the stepson made another trial as Belmonte and Tamino on the Dresden stage under Weber (who was just about completing his *Freischütz*), and then bade farewell to home, to take up his first engagement at Breslau, where Geyer knew that he would be well looked after by his old friend Bierey (see p. 39). His departure left a sensible gap; "at table," we are naïvely told, "he was specially missed at the bread-slicing," an office which returned to the head of the family. Rosalie, too, had made such progress under her stepfather's tuition and by dint of her own industry, that she was engaged about the same time (May 1, 1820) for the Royal Court-players, with a salary of 824 thalers. On May 21, the eve of Richard's seventh anniversary, she made her first actual entry on this new dignity, in a comedy rôle.

As to Richard's own progress, we have many a hint in Geyer's household reports to Albert: at one time we hear that "Richard leaves a trousers-seat per day on the hedge"; at another, "Richard is growing big, and a good scholar." The boy has scarcely learnt a note of music yet, but in everything else shews such remarkable quickness of apprehension that Geyer finds the greatest pleasure in watching over his education; he would have liked to make him a painter, "but I was never any good at drawing," as Wagner once told us himself. Geyer was also fond of taking him as companion on his daily walks, and not seldom would smuggle him into the theatre at rehearsal-time, thus laying the foundation of the stage's

magic power over Richard too, though it was against his father's wish for him to adopt that walk of life. For what concerns the boy's body, he had already acquired great agility in climbing, as in all kinds of acrobatic feats: before he was seven years old, he terrified his mother by riding down the winding staircase-rail as quick as thought. However, as he never made a slip, his people soon lost their alarm; in fact his brothers and sisters would frequently get him to shew visitors his skill in somersaults, standing on the head, and other small gymnastic tricks.

About this time occur the first disquieting signs of Geyer's failing health. In the winter of 1820 he had gone alone to Leipzig for awhile, more as painter than actor, stopping with his brother-in-law Adolf Wagner; who, since the death of his mother, had given up his bachelor quarters to join forces with sister Friederike in the Thomä house, where they set up a three-cornered establishment with their old friend its owner, Jungfer Jeannette. Here Geyer painted a good deal, and felt very unwell; so much so, that he withdrew from all outside intercourse, and vexed Adolf by refusing to take any share in his pet dramatic readings at the Trägers and Lacarrières. Alike "dwelling and inmates were dismal" to him; he complained of the unhealthy feel about the house; "the black poodle and the smoky old figures," life-size portraits in the Electoral apartments assigned to him, "have something uncanny which gets on one's nerves." Alarmed by his accounts of himself, his wife arrived at Leipzig to attend to him. "He is working too hard, and taking too little exercise," said the brother-in-law; "'tis a bad attack of spleen." But it was more than that; it was the beginning of a general decline, and Geyer never really recovered ground.

True, a 'cure' of several weeks' duration, with abstention from every form of work, so far restored the invalid that he was able to reappear in a comedy-rôle by the middle of February, and "once more enliven a large audience by his truly humorous acting." Meanwhile the "Slaughter of the Innocents" had been accepted by Count Könneritz for performance at the Dresden theatre; Tieck, as dramaturgic adviser to the Intendanz, having expressed a most favourable opinion of it. So Geyer took an active part in the inscenation of his piece, in which he himself played Painter Klaus, and thirteen-year-old Clara Wagner was given the rôle of one of the children. The performance took place on Feb. 20,

1821, winning a great success and many calls for the author.* But the exertion of figuring as playwright, manager and performer in one, must have proved a terrible strain on a man whose strength was hardly yet restored; as perhaps may be gathered from Böttiger's remark (in course of a long critique on the work and its production) that he could have wished that Geyer's reading of his own creation had been "kept more tranquil," though we must allow for the ordinary reporter's love of putting in a word himself. The piece was not repeated until several weeks later, owing to Geyer's state of health.

At Easter 1821 the family removed to a more roomy dwelling in a lofty old house at the corner of the Jüdenhof and Frauengasse, opposite the old Picture-gallery. It belonged to sword-cutler Voigt, the same who once had flashed before Richard's eyes a toy-sword intended for his Christmas-box, and hidden it again as quickly,—an impression keen in Wagner's memory for over sixty years. In front lay the shop of confectioner Orlandi, where the boy once "exchanged Schiller's poems for puffs." Geyer took great pains over a tasteful decoration of the new abode, and rejoiced in its larger and more commodious studio. As Spring advanced, he bestowed peculiar care on the culture of his garden, in which he hoped to gather his dear ones round him for many a year. "When I've nothing to do, I don't go to the theatre, but poke about in my garden," he writes to Albert, who had asked him for an item of news. As his piece was coming on

* Besides Geyer as Maler Klaus, the wife Sophie was played by Mme. Schirmer, the scene-shifter Texel by Pauli, Master-of-arts Stockmann by Geiling. Of little Clara's performance we read, "Again young Clara Wagner, whom we have already seen play more than one small part with true childlike innocence and liveliness, displayed a quite delightful talent. The stage may cherish pleasant hopes of this young bud."—We append a very incomplete list of first performances at *other* theatres: Breslau, June 1821—the only other one in Geyer's lifetime; Hamburg, Oct. 1821; Weimar, Spring 1822, with Durand as Maler Klaus; Berlin, Jan. 14, 1823, where the humorous acting of the famous Pius Alexander Wolff and his wife kept the play for long upon the lists; Stuttgart, March 1823; Prague, Sept. 1823, with several revivals; Leipzig, Nov. 1824; Kassel, 1828 (?); Aachen, July 1829, and so on; finally Bayreuth, May 22, 1873, for Richard Wagner's sixtieth birthday. The rôle of Texel seems to have everywhere offered occasion for the most curious gags: the Riga town-theatre's acting copy is full of enigmatic variants from the author's text; for instance, "The Jews have never brought us luck" is turned into the absurdity, "A heathen image never brought us luck."

at Breslau, he sent minute directions as to scenic details, the length and breadth of the picture that has to be overturned, etc., etc. At the same time he heard the good news of the brilliant reception of *Der Freischütz* in Berlin (June 18), a work whose Dresden production he was not to live to see. Weber had set out on May the 1st, to be on the spot in good time; but, owing to the over-taxing of the company by Spontini for his *Olympie*, the rehearsals could not begin until three weeks later. The decisive battle had now been won; at midnight stage-manager Hellwig left the banquet given in Weber's honour after the performance, to return to his friends at Dresden with tidings of triumph.

In the middle of summer Geyer went with Rosalie to Breslau, where his "Kindermord" so lately had come to successful production. For the first time in twelve years he saw the town again, and renewed pleasant memories with old friends and acquaintances such as Bierey and Mosevius; but the stay there did him little good. After an absence of four weeks he returned to Dresden, in a very low state; at a representation on the 28th August he had to battle with serious indisposition, but he appeared yet another time, and moreover took part in the reading-rehearsal of a new piece, "The Burgomaster of Saardam."* Again accompanied by Rosalie, he went next for a change of air to Pillnitz "by order, but not at expense, of the Queen"; the continuously rough and wintry weather did nothing for his convalescence. On the 19th September fell the mother's forty-third birthday, a family-festival which had never gone by without some gay surprise invented and arranged by Geyer; for the first time he was absent on that day. From Pillnitz he sends her his congratulations, bewailing his inability to prepare a treat for her, "but it is his whim to make it up right heartily on his return to the home circle." The bad weather compels him to cut his holiday short. After a complete rest, he feels rather better in town; but the next day his condition is exacerbated by a violent attack of asthma. Between the paroxysms he still is occupied with the concerns of life; thus, prostrated as he is, he is full of the desire to get his excellent portrait of the King of Saxony reduplicated by litho-

* Since the year 1801 the minor theatres of Paris had produced over ten different pieces dealing with the supposed adventures of Peter the Great at Saardam; Lortzing subsequently used a German version of one of these for the book of his well-known opera *Czar und Zimmermann*.

graphy. To divert him, Richard must shew what he had learnt on the pianoforte: he played "Üb' immer Treu' und Redlichkeit" and the latest novelty, the "Jungfernkranz" from *Freischütz*; in the adjoining room he heard the sick man murmur to his mother, "Has he a possible talent for *music*?"

At nine in the evening next day, the 30th of September, the valiant heart had ceased to beat. A letter from Kriegsrath Georgi to the old Breslau comrade Bierey tells us of the inconsolable grief and despair of those left behind, of whom Rosalie alone had been able at last to control herself; in the presence of Richard and his sisters she had sworn to their mother a solemn oath—most faithfully observed—that she would carry out her filial duty to the departed, and become a prop to all of them. Early in the morning the mother had gone into the nursery with a word for each of the children; to Richard she said, "Of thee he would fain have made something." To the boy it was as if a legacy from his dead guardian; "for a long time," he says, "I fancied that something indeed might become of me."

Geyer's earthly remains were laid at rest a few days later, at seven on a bleak autumnal morning; pair after pair, followed his colleagues of the Dresden stage, with a few more intimate personal friends. Round the open grave stood a family bereaved for the second time of a loving father, whose care had ever striven nobly to replace the first one's loss.

IV.

RICHARD WAGNER AS CHILD.

First journey.—Impressions of Eisleben.—Return to Dresden.—Admission into the Kreuzschule.—The new suit.—Sister Cäcilie as playfellow.—Dread of ghosts.—Loschwitz: tale of a pumpkin.—Love of Nature and dumb animals.—"The history of my dogs."—Affection for his mother.

> *Secure against denial by a father who died when I was in my cradle, perchance the Norn so often flouted stole gently to it, and there bestowed on me her gift, "the ne'er-contented mind intent forever on the new"; a gift which never left poor untrained me, but made life and art, and my own self, my only educators.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

GEYER had departed this life too early to guide the boy into any definite course, or even to discover what might be his natural inclination. No regular plans having as yet been formed for his future, he was sent for the time being to Eisleben, where his step-father's younger brother had volunteered to receive him.

For the present chapter in his life we have authentic data recorded by Richard Wagner himself, and also by his nephew F. Avenarius (in a contribution to the *Augs. Allg. Zeitung* of 1883 entitled "Richard Wagner as a child"). To these we shall add such details from F. Praeger's mostly untrustworthy "Wagner as I knew him" as to us appear to bear the stamp of probability. Composing the differences between Praeger's English and German versions, we will commence with a narration he puts into the mouth of Richard Wagner himself in later years:

"My first journey was in October 1821.* Can one ever forget a first impression? And my first long journey was such an event!

* Praeger says "the beginning of 1822," but Wagner was always quite positive about the date as given above.

Why, I seem even to remember the physiognomy of the poor lean horses that drew the jolting coach;—and mind you, a post-car of those days! The horses were being changed at some intermediate station, the name of which I have now forgotten, when all the passengers had to alight. I stood outside the inn, eating the bread and butter which my dear little mother had provided me; to the astonishment of the postilion, as the tired-out horses were about to be led away I kissed them and thanked them for having brought me so far. Everything seemed strange to me, every cloud seemed different from the clouds at Dresden. How I looked around, to meet some new feature in everything! How grand I felt when the heavy car rolled through the gate of Eisleben! The town inspired me with particular interest; I knew it to be the birthplace of great Luther, one of the heroes of my childhood. Nor was it without a reason, that religion should occupy the attention of a boy of my age; it was a question of conscience with my thoroughly Lutheran family. As soon as we came to Dresden, where the court was Roman Catholic, all manner of means, both direct and indirect, were tried to make us embrace the court-religion. In vain, for my family remained staunch to the faith of its forefathers. What attracted me most in the great Reformer's character, was his dauntless energy and fearlessness. Since then I have often thought of the true instinct of the child —had I not also, as man, to preach a new gospel of art? Have I not also had to bear every insult in its defence? And have I not, too, had to say, 'Here I stand, God help me; I cannot be otherwise!'?"

The goldsmith uncle, to whom brother Julius had been apprenticed, dwelt at No. 55 on the Market of this Luther town, the house now belonging to a tradesman Eberhardt. Richard seems to have been taught at first by his uncle himself; then, according to the latest inquiries, he went to a private school kept by Pastor Alt. As Praeger makes him continue: "My good uncle tried his best to put me through some educational training, and ever held the famous Dresden Kreuzschule before me as an incentive to my zeal. That I did not profit much by his instruction, was, I fear, my own fault. I preferred rambling about the little country town and its environs, to learning the rules of grammar. Legends and fables of all kinds then had an immense fascination over me, and I often beguiled my uncle into reading

me a story that I might avoid working. But what always drew me towards him, was his boundless veneration for the memory of my own loved stepfather. Whenever he spoke of him, and he did so very often, he always referred to his loving good-nature, his amiability, and his gifts as an artist, and ever would end with a tearful sigh 'that he had to die so young.'"—

Among other news that came from Dresden in those days, were the tidings of the first performance of *Der Freischütz* there on January 26, 1822, amid boundless enthusiasm; a laurel-wreath tied up with verses had been passed up from the parterre to Weber's desk. Visitors from the surrounding country streamed-in in shoals whenever the piece was announced; and the house was packed at every repetition.* So the child's ninth birthday passed among the echoes of a work that was presently to take such hold of his imagination; while Weber himself had already begun the composition of his *Euryanthe*.

But the Eisleben stay was not to be of long duration, owing to a change in uncle Geyer's circumstances. "Rosalie complains of the Eisleben uncle," writes uncle Adolf to Albert at Breslau; "surely one might excuse him with his altered situation, but still more in view of the wild suggestions of the mother, which are none the more laudable for their being well meant." This harsh remark of Adolf Wagner's seems founded less on reason, than on the old dispute between himself and what had now become the Geyer family; had he not lately been crossed again, when his brother's second daughter, Louise, adopted the theatrical profession for good by accepting an engagement at Breslau? "You would like Richard to come to us," he continues, "and were things as you think, it would be desirable. Only, they are not. Within the last few years I have been so taken to task by life, that I feel myself in the state of falling bodies, which become heavier (in whatever sense you choose to take it) the lower they fall. Now this demands too strenuous a saving of myself and my time, for me to be able to bestow the requisite attention upon Richard. For these reasons I asked my friend Prof. Lindner to negotiate some means for furthering Richard's education, and delayed my answer to you in the hope of sending definite news; but the only answer I have received to all my questions to L.,

* For the first twenty-five performances from 12 to 14,000 persons came into town, many of them from distances of fifty to sixty miles.

has been that he himself had received none as yet to the inquiries which he had made." The letter goes on to relate an accident that had happened to poor Jeannette Thomä; on Christmas-eve she had slipped on the pavement, broken her left leg, and been brought home on a litter "in a pitiful plight." Adolf winds up the description of his household troubles with the words: "So you may judge for yourself if we could take in Richard here."*

While Albert, apparently on his own initiative, was making these inquiries of his uncle Adolf, young Richard's immediate destiny had been decided otherwise. At the time that Adolf's letter was written, the boy had already returned to the bosom of his family. There could be no real doubt in the mind of his relatives as to what his stepfather would have advised; it was always his wish that Richard should become a student, and there could be no more fitting preparation than that to be obtained at the Dresden Kreuzschule. On the 2nd of December 1822, in the middle of the winter term, he was therefore received into the second division of the fifth class of that school, under the name of "Richard Geyer," which he seems to have borne since his mother's second marriage.† This had been preceded by a preliminary examination, the prospect of which had filled the boy with dread, for all his pride at the idea of entering a Gymnasium. The venerable appearance of the building, the echo of his own footfall on the stone steps of the hall, made the little heart beat fast in timid expectation of what was yet to come. However, his examination went off better than he had anticipated, probably more in virtue of his ready and intelligent answers, than of his somewhat scrappy information; at anyrate he always kept a fond remembrance of the teachers at this school, and their kindly treatment of the pupils.

We reach the Christmastide of 1822. Imagine the new Cross-scholar's delight, when beside the cake and gingerbread—without

* A longer extract from this letter is given in C. F. Glasenapp's article, "Adolf Wagner, ein Lebensbild," *Bayreuther Blätter*, July-August 1885.

† In his mother's application to the Kreuzschule the stepfather had been explicitly given out as the *father* (a not infrequent occurrence in such formalities), and thus we find him inscribed by Rector Gröbel under number 588 of the current list of scholars in the *Pandectæ rerum Scholam D. Crucis concernentium* (commenced in 1688) as "*Wilhelm Richard Geyer*, son of the deceased Court-player Geyer, born at Leipzig the 22nd May 1813, *recip.* the 2nd December 1822, Cl. v. Div. 2."

which no German Christmasing were thinkable—he found on the board a brand-new suit, "to cut a decent figure at school." This time he had been allowed to rise at daybreak, to help adorn the christmas-tree; never could he see one afterwards without recalling his mother's tender love, and so late as 1857, after an interval of five-and-thirty years, we find him referring to this same "new suit."

The widow still retained the comfortable set of rooms in Herr Voigt's house on the Jüdenhof. The elder children were earning good pay; Geyer's stock of pictures had gone up in value; a Royal pension appears to have helped: in brief, though Frau Geyer was not exactly left well off, yet she was not precisely poor. As Albert and Louise were engaged at the Breslau theatre, her household at present consisted of Rosalie, Clärchen, Ottilie, Richard and Cäcilie. When the first period of mourning was over, the mother once more gathered in her rooms a goodly share of Dresden's best society; and "all the children took after their parents too much, to forget that life's earnestness can bear a tidy pinch of humour in its daily flavouring. If quarrels arose among themselves, the spirit of Geyer's bringing-up soon restored the wonted harmony."*

Richard's chief companion at this age of nine was his "pretty little dark-haired sister Cile," who worshipped him and treasured everything he said as gospel. He is always with her whenever he "has time," according to a boy's notion of it; with her he hatches out his plans; with her he scours the fields, though not without the male's strict sense of condescension; with her he shares his little cubicle at home. "By day, one of the children would be waiting at the window for the other to come back from school; by night they had to suffer for each other, as both were most excitable and fitful sleepers. They had a holy dread of being left in the dark at any time; Richard would see ghosts in every corner, while Cile gave them tongue. Of the steep dark stairs leading up to the suite the boy had an especial horror: if it was evening by the time he reached home, he would ring down a maid with a candle, despite all orders to the contrary. 'Bless me!' he would say when reproved again, 'I was only playing with it, ever so lightly, and the silly thing began to ring';—at other

* F. Avenarius, after the reminiscences of his mother Cäcilie, from which the following anecdotes are also borrowed.

times the 'silly thing' refused to ring till one tugged at its rusty crank with all one's might. Once the pair stayed out too late, and had to trudge back from Blasewitz in the dark: what a skeltering past the churchyards! Luckily a cart came by; they hailed it, explaining that they had no money, but really didn't weigh much; the driver had some sense of humour, and Richard was soon proudly crying, 'See now, Cile! There's the old graveyard with its ghosts; but—clck!—they can't catch us now.'"

Cäcilie had plenty to say of her brother's sudden shouts and talking in his sleep, his laughter and tears in the night; but she herself was not much better. Once she ran breathless to her mother: "There's a great bogey in my bed." Richard was no little pleased; thenceforth whenever he wanted to tease her, he had only to creep under the bed and cry in an unearthly voice: "Cile! Cile! there's a great big bogey hiding in your bed."* However, these little practical jokes caused no ill-feeling: when it once seemed threatening in fact, the boy surprised his sister with a cap which he had stitched for her doll himself, and all was smooth again. "I never could be angry with him," says Cäcilie in remembrance of that happy time, "for he either had his mouth so full of childish jokes that I was forced to laugh against my will, or his eyes so full of tears that I myself must cry." Very often these tears were in bitter earnest — but not always: for instance when he wanted to run round to the theatre and look on from the wings, and his views as to its preferability to preparing his lessons did not coincide with his mother's, he would plant his elbows on the table and mark time: "Oh dear! Now they're doing that—now that—and that," and sob as if his heart would break, making grimaces at Cäcilie all the while. As a rule the ruse succeeded: "Off you go!" came the order, and he was off in a twinkling.

But the children's brightest days were those when their mother took them to the country. An early stay at Loschwitz on the Elbe lingered in their recollection long after boy and girl had become man and woman (down to a few years ago, at least, the house where they lodged was still standing). Mother and elder sisters had much to do in town, and mostly left the children in

* "This 'big bogey' became a catch-word in the family. I myself possess two letters in which the long since adult master threatens his sister with it in jest" (F. Avenarius).

charge of their rustic landlady, or of a Frau Doktorin Schneider at Blasewitz, where they had built themselves a hut of waste planks next the dog-kennel, in which to tell each other stories. The boats skimming by on the Elbe lent wings to their fancy; inventive as Wieland of the saga, Richard set about building one himself, which the couple meant for no less an adventure than a sail on the Loschwitzer brook!

With the freedom of the open air an irresistible passion for going barefoot seizes them, the sister in particular. A drawing by Kietz, in the possession of the Avenarius family, shews us the boy in the fraternal act of sharing his foot-gear with her. Impatient to welcome back their mother, Cile and her brother have rushed off to the landing-stage one afternoon; but it is raining, and has turned bitterly cold; while the children are sitting lonely on a fallen tree-trunk, waiting for the boat that won't make haste to come from Dresden, Cile's naked feet begin to freeze. "Stop a bit!" says Richard, "just you pull on this one of my boots, and we'll warm the other feet on one another." This is the moment chosen for the little sketch: a symbol of Wagner's readiness throughout his life to share what he owned with the needy, as expressed in his praise of the old Aryan heroes (*P. W.* VI. 278).

A more tragic incident, the tale of the big pumpkin, likewise has Loschwitz for its background. Mother and sisters were in town, whither Richard's tutor—who "explained Cornelius Nepos" to him, and seems to have fruitlessly endeavoured to teach him to "draw eyes and a flat head"—had also gone. Now it so happened that Richard had discovered a mighty pumpkin, in which he carved not only "eyes," but a nose and a grinning mouth: a fearsome sight. "Come, Cile, we'll have fine fun with this!" Cile was quite ready; only, she also had made a discovery, namely that their hostess had taken Frau Geyer's best porcelain tea-set from the cupboard in mamma's absence and without her permission, to use it for her private guests; all the budding housewife's sense of propriety was outraged, and the young lady determined that, if they both went out and left the sitting-room unguarded, at least it should be left secure: "We'll take away the latch and door key!" So out they sallied: first into the village, to frighten people out of their wits; then, as somehow that wouldn't succeed, up aloft to the hills. Key and latch were deposited in the pumpkin—a fine clatter they made!

—and down it was rolled to the bottom. A glorious game they had, racing down after the pumpkin, scrambling up with it again, and so on ad infinitum. At last it turned dusk, and they must be getting home. But the stupid pumpkin had lost both latch and key, through its mouth! How to get into the parlour, and their bedroom that lay behind? A good job, mother can't come back to-night; the house-folk daren't go beyond scolding. "You'll just have to sleep on the stove-bench out here," they acquainted the culprits when through with their lecture. After shedding tears enough, Richard and Cile pulled off their clothes, sobbed a little more, shivered, froze, and fell asleep. It was night by the time Dominie Humann arrived, the mother having sent him from town to see after the children. In judicial calm he stood to hear the charges and defence of those aroused from slumber. But it gradually dawned upon his brain that *he* must pass the night too on the stove-bench: then his wrath boiled up, and scathingly he trounced the "little wretches." He had the worst of it, however; proud as Minerva, with "Sir!—what are you thinking of?—It has nothing at all to do with you—it was *I* who did it—and besides—" etc., Cile placed herself with arms a-kimbo between her brother and the tutor, as Kietz has drawn this scene as well. The dénouement was suggested by the remark of a disinterested party that, after all, one might get in quite well through the window, with help of a ladder. So Richard and Cile hung their clothes on their arms, and were up in a trice; with proper dignity the tutor slowly followed after.—"If we only hadn't put the key in the pumpkin," writes Wagner sadly to his sister some thirty years later, when in exile, "everything would have gone much better. Don't you agree with me?"*

One principal trait of Richard Wagner's character was already shewing in the boy: his pronounced and passionate love of *Nature*. Singing and romping by his sister's side, or pushing her along in the little hand-sledge in winter, to roam about the country was his chief delight. At times they would go to the Linkesches Bad, on the right of the Elbe: in the meadow bounding its garden they had open air combined with music, as paling-guests of the concerts. Or mother would give each of them a sechser (value 6 pfennigs),—then they were "splendidly off," and could venture as far as the Plauenscher Grund, or even

* See F. Avenarius: *Richard Wagner als Kind.*

to Loschwitz, and buy a glass of milk to wash down the rolls they had brought with them. The strange thing was, that Richard, ever so glad to look at fruit and flowers, could never take them in his hand. But his love of Nature came out strongest in his devotion to dumb animals. The boy who had thanked and kissed the weary horses on the way to Eisleben, would always be exploring for dogs with whom to strike up friendship. He knew every hound in the neighbourhood, and his sister and he had a regular system of espionage for litters of pups to be rescued from drowning. Once he heard something whining in a pond, and with the aid of his sister he fished out a newborn puppy: previous experience told him that it was forbidden to bring it home; but that couldn't be helped; he wasn't going to let the poor thing die. So Cile smuggled it into her bed. However, it betrayed a defective grasp of the situation: it whimpered, and stood revealed. Another time he improvised a rabbit-hutch in his lesson-desk, cutting a large air-hole in its back.—At last he obtained his mother's permission to keep a dog of his own; but when the children were out one day the poor beast fell out of the window, and broke its neck,—long, long was it mourned. This incident, which he is said to have described in a later period as the greatest sorrow of those years, would probably have formed the opening chapter of that "History of my Dogs" so long projected for his family's perusal. Throughout his life it was as good as impossible for him to be quite happy without "something to bark around him," and the *History of my Dogs* would have proved a very significant autobiography, revealing aspects of the artist's mind which, as it is, we have to piece together for ourselves from fragmentary utterances.

He never could bear to see an animal maltreated; at such a sight his anger knew no bounds, and he would throw himself on the delinquent without regard to consequences. "One of his first impressions was a chance visit he paid with some of his school-fellows to a slaughter yard. An ox was about to be killed. The butcher stood with uplifted axe. The horrible implement descended on the head of the stately animal, who gave a low, deep moan. The boy turned deadly pale, and would have rushed at the butcher had not his companions forcibly held him back and taken him away from the scene. For some time after he could not touch meat. . . . When a man, he could not refer to

Wagner sums up this epoch of his youth as follows: "I do not believe there can have been a boy more devoted to classical antiquity, than myself at the time I attended the Dresden Kreuzschule. Though Greek mythology and history formed my chief attractions, I also felt drawn to the Greek language itself with a power that made me almost ungovernable in my shirking of Latin. How far my case was normal in this regard, I cannot judge; but I may add that my favourite master at the Kreuzschule, Dr Sillig, was so pleased with my enthusiasm that he strongly urged me to adopt *philology* as my profession" (*P. W.* V. 292). His imagination was fired by the deeds of the champions of freedom in the Persian wars, his fancy by the tales of Greek mythology in K. Ph. Moritz' "Götterlehre." The wrath of Achilles and Ulysses' wanderings, the heroic figures of Ajax and Hercules, the fate of Philoctetes and the gloom of the Œdipus legend, alike became realities to his plastic mind; and it is quite in keeping with these boyish impressions that in the year 1850, when he had already passed completely to the sphere of northern saga, besides his *Siegfried* and his *Wieland* he was thinking out a tragic drama of *Achilles*. In his own words, "Again and again, amid the most absorbing labours of a life entirely distracted from such studies, have I won my only breath of freedom by a plunge into the ancient world" (*P. W.* V. 293).

To take Praeger's word for it, he was plagued with his cutaneous malady even in his schooldays. Repeated attacks of the kind may perhaps account for his slow promotion during his second school-year, as compared with the years immediately succeeding. "An attack would be preceded by depression of spirits and irritability of temper. Conscious of his growing peevishness, he sought refuge in solitude. As soon as the attack was subdued, his bright animal spirits returned, and none would recognise in the daring little fellow the previous taciturn misanthrope." The psychology is Praeger's, but, allowing for defects of focus, it probably is pretty near the mark.

The same informant tells us that as soon as Richard had grown a little used to school his ready wit procured him a band of followers among his schoolmates, but "the stupid hated him, as ever"; also that the headstrongness with which he pursued his will against all opposition was the cause of frequent quarrels, which would often have ended in blows, but for his winning talent

of persuasion: "Practical joking was a favourite sport with him, but only indulged in when harm could befall no one, and incident offered some comic situation. To hurt one willingly, was impossible in Wagner. He was ever kind, and would never have attempted anything that might result in real pain. His superabundance of animal spirits, well-seconded by his active frame, led him often into harebrained escapades; but his fearless intrepidity was tempered and dominated by a strong self-reliance, which always came to the rescue at the critical moment." As an instance, we may give the same author's account of an adventure which Wagner's eldest brother is said to have related to him (Praeger) in illustration of Richard's foolhardiness.

One day, so this story runs, a holiday was suddenly proclaimed to the boys at work in school. Wild with excitement at the rare event, they rushed out into the street, shouting and throwing their caps in the air. On the impulse of the moment Richard caught one of these, and flung it right up to the roof of the schoolhouse. Among his admiring schoolfellows there was one who did not cheer, however—the one who had lost his cap. As he never could bear to see anybody in tears, with his usual swiftness of resolve young Wagner ran off to recover the missile. Back into the building, upstairs to the cock-loft, out through a ventilator, he emerged on the roof. The youngsters down below huzzaed, but held their breath when they saw the intrepid urchin scrambling down the steep incline on all fours. Some hurried off to fetch the porter. When the man arrived, they crowded after him as he edged his ladder up the narrow stairway. Meanwhile the climber had secured his prize, crawled back in safety, and managed to creep through the air-hole into the pitch-dark garret just in time to hear the buzz of voices on the stairs. Panting, he hid himself behind a partition, and waited for the dreaded "custos" to mount the ladder and peep out; then, half scared, half joking, he left his retreat and asked quite coolly: "Whatever are you looking for? Is it a bird?" "Eh! a gallows-bird" was the scathing answer of the angry porter, heartily glad, however, to see the scapegrace safe and sound.—When this story was repeated to the master in after years he is said to have confirmed its details, adding a touch known only to himself: he remembered that he had been seized with giddiness upon the roof, and was about to give himself up for lost, when his peril extorted the cry, "Mein

liebes Mütterchen!"—those words reacted on him like a charm, restored his courage, and enabled him to scale the roof and regain the opening.

The escapade was not allowed to pass without a lecture from the headmaster, threatening more appreciable punishment should the culprit be caught in any such exploit again. Perhaps this may help us to date it. Only *once* in all his Dresden school-time, namely at Michaelmas 1823, is Richard's "conduct" rated merely "tolerable" in the half-yearly report—otherwise it is always "good" or "very good"; and Albert Wagner was actually on a visit to Dresden about this time, to accompany his sister Rosalie to Hamburg for a double star-engagement in which he was to figure as "first tenor from Breslau."

Besides his regular education, the boy had remained in unbroken connection with the theatre through his brother and sisters, as erewhile through his stepfather. We have already referred to Geyer's personal relations with the honoured master who had occupied the post of Royal Saxon Kapellmeister since 1817, also to Weber's difficulties with a "German Opera" demanded by the larger public but looked at with indifference by the court. As "Schauspiel" and "Singspiel" were served by the same company, the dramaturg Tieck and the conductor Weber were all but hostile captains. Equally active was the Italian Opera's antagonism against the German musician: under the all-powerful protection of Cabinet-minister von Einsiedel, Morlachi as Italian Kapellmeister with his subordinate the Concertmeister Polledro waged incessant war against Weber; and it is characteristic of his position at Dresden that *Der Freischütz* came to an earlier hearing in Berlin and Vienna than on the spot where its author himself was engaged.* When Richard played the "Jungfernkranz" to his dying stepfather, the work itself had not been performed as yet in the Saxon capital; his return from Eisleben

* Here are a few prize specimens of his systematic snubbing at Dresden. To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Friedrich August's accession, Weber had composed a "Jubilee Cantata"; it was struck off the programme. For the marriage of Prince Friedrich he was commanded to compose a festival opera; the order was rescinded. The production of his *Sylvana* at Dresden was made impossible by intrigues against him; and when he returned there in the full flush of his *Freischütz*' Berlin triumph, he was greeted by his superfine Intendant with the incredulous question, "Why, Weber! are you really so big a man?"

to Dresden coincided with the height of its popularity. Tieck's protest, that "the Freischütz was the most unmusical din that ever had brawled across the boards," had been drowned in the general acclamation. Writing in 1841, Wagner himself describes the immense sensation raised throughout all Germany: "Weber's countrymen from North and South united in their admiration of the accents of this pure and pregnant elegy, from the adherents of Kant's 'Criticism of pure Reason' to the readers of the Vienna 'Mode-Journal.' The Berlin philosopher hummed 'The bridal wreath for thee we bind'; the police-director repeated with enthusiasm 'Through the woods and through the meadows'; whilst the court-lacquey hoarsely sang 'The joy of the hunter'—and I myself remember having practised, as a child, a quite diabolical turn of voice and gesture to give due grit to 'In this earthly vale of woe.'"

From this last sentence we may judge the work's effect on the boy's receptive mind: nothing on earth came up to the *Freischütz;* on it was centred all the fervour of his lively temper. Still without declared or conscious passion for music, the charm of this its manifestation usurped his youthful soul, and drew it quite within the magic circle. *Der Freischütz* was the clue that led him to its author's other works, and to his person: never could he forget the fascination when, hidden in a corner of the theatre, he heard the first weird shivering of the cymbals in the *Preziosa* overture; and he would often recall the thrill wherewith he saw the spare and fragile figure of the master returning from rehearsal, passing the house in the Jüdenhof, or even entering it to exchange a few words with his mother. * He regarded him with a holy awe, and, beckoning sister Cile to his side, would whisper to her: "My! that's the greatest man alive! How great he is, you haven't the weeniest notion." The flood of tears which formed his last, and often but too natural device for escaping from his evening-tasks to the theatre, flowed chiefly on *Der Freischütz* nights. Then, when he saw his hero at head of the orchestra, his heart would cry aloud, "Not King nor Emperor, but to stand there like a General, and conduct!" † Scarcely

* Hans von Wolzogen, *Erinnerungen an Richard Wagner*, 2nd ed. (Reclam) 1891, pp. 22-23.

† Weber had introduced this practice into Dresden as an innovation; previously the band had been led in Italian fashion from the first violin-desk, whilst the conductor's duties were confined to directing the singers.

past the earliest five-finger exercises on the piano, he taught himself by ear and stealth the *Freischütz* overture, much to the disapproval of his music-master: it was the first outward sign of the musician, and called forth an instant rebuff. Intention and execution were scarcely on a par, but already the inner spirit of the tone-poem had passed so fully and distinctly into his mind, that twenty years later,—when he himself had to conduct it in Dresden for the first time,—he was able to restore the whole romantic flavour of this forest-fantaisie to the purity of a time before its tempo and expression had been falsified by Reissiger.

Hans v. Wolzogen records the following, from a conversation with the master in later years: "I begged my mother for a couple of groschen to buy music-paper with, so that I might write out Weber's *Lützow's wilde verwegene Jagd*, in order to *possess* it. In its 'possession' of Weber's music lay Germany's fortune. Here the poor fatherlandless German found his fatherland. When the whole misery of Saxon history was read out to us at school, and I had to tell myself 'That's what you belong to,' I sought in humiliation for something besides; then I learnt of the existence of our Weber's music, and knew where lay my native land: *I felt myself a German.* That feeling never left me." * Twenty years afterwards it resounds from the sojourn in Paris: "O my glorious German fatherland, how can I else than love thee, were it only that from out thy soil there sprang the 'Freischütz'! Needs must I love the German Folk that loves the 'Freischütz,' that e'en to-day, in full-grown manhood, still feels those sweet mysterious thrills which made its heart beat fast in youth. Ah! thou adorable German reverie; thou *Schwärmerei* of woods and gloaming, of stars, of moon, of village-bells when chiming seven at eve! Happy he who understands you, can feel, believe, can dream and lose himself with you! How dear it is to me that *I*, too, am a German!—" (*P. W.* VII. 183).

"Music was not thought of" in his first stage of education, as he tells us: "Two of my sisters learnt to play the pianoforte; I listened to them, but had no lessons myself. Then a tutor, who explained *Cornelius Nepos* to me, at last had to teach me the piano as well" (*P. W.* I. 3-4). This ended in that episode with the *Freischütz* overture, when his tutor declared that nothing

* H. v. Wolzogen, *Erinnerungen*, p. 22.

would come of him. Sister Cäcilie was present, and says that Richard bounded up at this pronouncement, and thundered out "You may go to Jericho with your piano-teaching! I shan't play any more." But "the man was right," continues Wagner, "in all my life I have never learned to play the piano properly. Thenceforth I played for my own amusement; nothing but overtures, with the most fearful fingering. It was impossible for me to play a passage clearly, and I conceived a just dread of all scales and runs. Of Mozart I only cared for the overture to the *Magic Flute; Don Giovanni* went against my grain, because of the Italian text beneath: it seemed to me such rubbish."

But matters did not stop there. His head was so full of *Der Freischütz* that he longed to take an active part in it. He determined to get up a private performance of the scene in the Wolf's-gulch; it was to take place at the abode of one of his friends, in what was formerly known as merchant Höfer's house, not far from the Kreuzschule; Richard was to play Kaspar, his friend to play Max. Funds in provision of the necessary pasteboard, paper and paint, he saved penny by penny from his breakfast-money; his schoolmates had to share in the interminable work of cutting, trimming and devising. Scenery, wings, curtain, fireworks and all, were gradually laid in, and among other fearsome monsters there was a terrible boar, with great white tusks, to make a raid upon his stage.

We find a hint of such diversions in the *Communication to my Friends* (1851), where he says, "I felt an inclination to play-acting, and indulged it in the quiet of my chamber; in all probability this was aroused in me by the close connection of my family with the stage." By now another sister had adopted the profession: on May 1, 1824, occurred the début of sister Clara, as "*Signora Clara Wagner*," temporarily engaged at the Court Italian Opera. Since her earliest attempts in fantastic child-rôles such as Lili in the *Donauweibchen*, the guardian spirit Jeriel in the *Teufelsmühle* etc. (for the most part by the side of Frau Hartwig), she had profited by a long course of vocal study to become an expert singer. Her first vocal part was that of Angiolina in Rossini's *Cenerentola*, with its thousand-times repeated crescendi and colorature; and not only the young artist's charming presence, her youthful freshness and childlike naïvety, but in particular a virtuosity far beyond her years, obtained the full approval of

Dresden connoisseurs and critics.* It was much to Richard's disappointment that this début should have taken place at the hated Italian, and not the German Opera: shortly thereafter he must have been the more rejoiced at seeing Rosalie play "Preziosa" under Weber's own baton; a part in which she made her first excursion from Recited Play, and alike in song and dance, gesture, dress and bearing, presented a "most charming picture," winning repeated salvoes of applause from an overflowing house. In fact, she made so great an impression upon her audience, that the memory of her poetic rendering was not effaced by Schröder-Devrient herself.† A like success awaited her at Leipzig, where she played a number of "guest" rôles the following winter; among them Kätchen von Heilbronn, Marianne in Goethe's *Geschwister*, and this same "Preziosa."

At Easter 1825 Richard was moved up to the Fourth Class in the Kreuzschule. His promotion from this time onward is regular in succession, and evidence of his unceasing industry. His mind is now unfolding in every direction, and Geyer's earlier words, "Richard is growing big and a good scholar," are gaining full

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* In the "Chronik der kgl. Schaubühne: *Cenerentola, ossia la bontà in triumfo*" of the Dresden *Abendzeitung* No. 116, May 14, 1824, we read: "In this piece a young pupil of our Chorus-director Mieksch, Dem. Clara Wagner, the sixteen-year-old sister of our court-actress Rosalie Wagner, made her first appearance at the Italian Opera. The audience was pleased to remark that the débutante's voice is most excellent in quality, volume and compass, and affords great promise for the future. To go into particulars, we found distinctness and expression in declamatory song, especially in recitative, a free, well-accented and intelligible enunciation, a pleasing sostenuto, taste and agility in ornament, and a correct distribution of the breath; the acting was well-judged and unconstrained. If she continues as she has begun, this young artist will certainly take honourable rank among the songstresses of Germany."

† Thus Alfred von Wolzogen in his life of Schröder-Devrient quotes a comparison once drawn between the Gipsy-maids of these two artists: "Rosalie Wagner lent her rôle a fresher colouring and livelier realisation of its mirth and archness; Frau Schröder-Devrient, on the other hand, with the charm of her lofty figure and the nobility of her carriage, gave more prominence to the sovereign power which Preziosa's beauty exerts over the rough gipsy-horde. . . . She recited the impromptu in the first act with grace and correctness, but here we preferred her predecessor (Rosalie Wagner), who gave more point to Preziosa's inner wrestling with the spirit of prophecy; for in this scene the audience should be led to believe that the lyrics spring fresh from the depths of the soul."

corroboration. The time of clambering on to the schoolhouse roof is over; ready as ever for a merry prank, he has higher aims in view. His reference to his boyish "enthusiasm for classical antiquity" would appear to apply to this period of his school-days in particular. Fortune had favoured him with the proper teachers at the Kreuzschule to fan and feed the flame, and occasion soon arose to wake his dormant faculties. On the 28th of November 1825 his class was robbed by scarlet fever of one of its most popular members, a lad of equal age with Richard, full of bright hopes, deeply mourned by teachers and comrades. The death occurred in the middle of the night: the following morning the sad tidings were announced to the assembled school, together with the task of writing an appropriate poem for the burial on the morrow, when the body was to be accompanied to the graveyard of S. Elias by the whole gymnasium, masters and boys. Richard's poem won the prize, and was accordingly printed, though not before he "had cleared of it much bombast. I was eleven years of age then," he says, "and promptly determined to be a poet."* He sketched out tragedies on the model of the Greeks, instigated by acquaintance with August Apel's *Polyidos*, *Die Aitolier*, *Kallirhoe* etc., with all the wonders he had heard at school about the grandeur of the old Greek Theatre and its national significance. We have already mentioned Apel's *Polyidos* and Adolf Wagner's direction of a private performance thereof at Leipzig (p. 25); the *Kallirhoe* also had been successfully produced at a small ducal theatre, with incidental music expressly composed for it. All three works of this talented author are to be regarded as a poetic embodiment of the results of his study of antique tragedy,† and their clever imitation of Greek forms of verse was better suited to the youthful mind

* We here have one of the extremely rare instances of a slip in the master's memory, else so accurate even in such minor details as immaterial dates; to be exact, he was just twelve and a half years old at the time.

† "It would be absurd to find fault with him for having adopted this particular course, instead of writing philologic treatises, perhaps in Latin," says Adolf Wagner. "The rapidity, poignancy, mass, of *Polyidos* point to an imitation of the Æschylic; the diffuseness, pathologic expansion of the *Aitolier* to the Euripidean style; the musical feeling of the *Kallirhoe* to a transition from the ancient to the modern. *Themistokles* was the subject chosen for an imitation of Sophocles; whilst a *Herakles in Lydien* was completed for a satyr-play, but never printed."

than stiff and clumsy literal translations by Voss or Stolberg. They may have been recommended for this purpose to the young enthusiast either by his school-teachers or by uncle Adolf himself, who paid a visit to Dresden in the summer of 1825 in order to give sister Rosalie a well-meant piece of advice.

Neither these tragic sketches of Richard's, nor the printed poem on the death of his schoolfellow, have been preserved; for nothing was ever farther from Wagner's thoughts, than to become the curator of his own intellectual by-products. Numerous inquiries were made by various persons in the master's lifetime, with a view to discovering the prize-poem and offering him a similar experience to that afforded Goethe, for instance, by the unearthing of his *Höllenfahrt Christi*. But the proper Eckermann was not to be found, though—bearing in mind the German's well-known fondness for hoarding up—it would still seem a simple matter to search the exercise-books etc. left behind by Wagner's schoolfellows and masters for a printed copy.

About this time the boy had a great sorrow to bear, in the news of his beloved Weber's death. Early one morning in February 1826 the ailing master had taken his last farewell of his family, to set out with his friend the flautist Fürstenau for London, viâ Paris and Calais, for the production of his *Oberon*. The reception accorded to his work at Covent Garden was good, to some extent enthusiastic; but he was not spared bitter disappointments, all the more trying to him after the struggles and exertions of his Dresden years. During the whole course of the thirteen personally-conducted performances of his opera his life was flickering to its end, and at last on the morning of June the 5th he was found dead in his bed: "weary and exhausted, through the magic horn of Oberon he breathed away his life's last breath."

This grief was partly alleviated by the return of Rosalie from a brilliant success at Prague. She had appeared in several rôles there, and gained the renown of "an actress of true vocation" as Kätchen von Heilbronn, Goethe's Marianne, and Juliet in particular. With regard to the last-named we read in a Prague letter to the Dresden *Abendzeitung* of July 8-9, "this gifted young artist was fully equal to her task, and held the audience spellbound. . . . The ball and balcony scenes, with Herr Moritz as Romeo, were particularly well conceived and carried out." At the same time Shakespeare is definitely dawning on Richard's horizon. The

boy does not content himself, however, with the current translations; accustomed to conquering difficulties, and getting to the root of a matter, he throws himself heart and soul into study of the English language, "merely to make a thorough acquaintance with Shakespeare," and produces a metrical rendering of Romeo's monologue into German as its first-fruit.

In addition to Shakespeare, he rushes with all the fervour of youth into Homer's world of heroes and adventure. Since Easter 1826, just thirteen years of age, he had entered the Third Class of his gymnasium; "in the third class I translated the first twelve books of the Odyssey," he tells us, and the archives of the Kreuzschule confirm his tale. Lists of works read by the various pupils appear to have been regularly entered up at that time; among those of Michaelmas 1826 we find under the heading "Extra private studies of the Third Class, 2nd div." a record of Richard's Homer-reading and his written translation of the first three books of the Odyssey,—a supplemental note, "Achilleus' Siegesfreude, Blum.," would seem to refer to some *Blumenlese*, or "golden treasury," of Greek poetry then in fashion. This brief specification does not acquire its true significance, however, until we compare it with what his schoolfellows achieved at the same time: only *two* of them ventured on Homer at all, and one of these had confined himself to *one* book of the Odyssey, the other to 200 verses of the Iliad; the rest had chosen easier or shorter tasks.* At Michaelmas we find him transferred to the Upper Third, as the fortieth of 56; half a year later he has passed over the heads of about thirty of his class-mates, and become *ninth* of 40 in that division.

Studies and aspirations in common led to school-friendships in which the ardour of his disposition would temporarily lift the chum above his natural level, only too often to drop back into the mediocrity of philistinism when the stimulus was removed. Thus he writes from Riga, eleven years after, to remind an old Dresden schoolmate how they had once "sworn in noble Hofrath-Böttiger enthusiasm, at the Kreuzschule, a death to all Creuzerian symbolism,"† how he had commenced philological epopees and

* According to an article in the *Dresdener Anzeiger* of 1883, "Richard Wagner auf der Kreuzschule in Dresden."

† Georg Friedrich Creuzer (Heidelberg), *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, four vols., Darmstadt 1810-22. The well-known scholar found just as vigorous opponents, as adherents to his treatment of Classical mythology; most prominent among the former were Joh. Heinrich Voss and the much-mentioned Dresden "Hofrath" and archæologist Böttiger.

tragedies, how Schelling's transcendental idealism had tripped them up at Leipzig, etc., etc. So far as lay in *his* power, the bond was never broken, and this letter goes on to say—with obvious reference to some boyish compact—that if the friend were so far away as Timbuctoo, he would certainly receive a letter from him (Wagner) "from Nova Zembla." Only, the other party would mostly fall off, having lost in the crush of daily life all breath for freer soaring.

At Easter 1827 Richard moved up into the Second Class with excellent credentials; on Palm Sunday, the 8th of April, he stood with a group of schoolfellows before the altar of the Kreuzkirche to receive his confirmation in the Evangelical Lutheran faith, when he bore the name of *Geyer* for the last time in any official document. Most of his fellows on that occasion were strapping lads of like age with himself, though lower in the school.* In an article from Paris, 1841, he jokes about "that old dress-coat in which I was confirmed, the coat I also wore when first I heard the *Water-carrier*." But we possess a more serious memento of that first Communion, namely in the second half of the Grail-theme in *Parsifal*, particularly in the purely vocal form it takes at the close of the first act, where the sopranos wing their "Selig im Glauben" in a threefold flight of ascending sixths. It is well known that this exactly corresponds to the "Amen" of the Saxon liturgy, both protestant and catholic, which Wagner had heard in childhood from the choir of Dresden churches. At what time, upon what occasion, could it have sounded more solemn to him, than on this Palm Sunday?

We have seen the boy studying English in private, for translations from Shakespeare: he soon laid English by, but kept to Shakespeare as his model. Among his poetic efforts of this period we have yet to mention a grand tragedy that occupied him for two whole years; modelled on Shakespeare, it outbid his longest catalogue of terrors; its author was a young Hercules strangling serpents in his cradle. "In drama the main point is

* For the benefit of the curious in such matters, we append a list of these. From the upper and lower Third we have *four*,—Richard Rose, Karl Julius Sperber, Ernst Moritz Zacharias, Harald Julius Bosse; from the Fourth, *one*,—Tamann; from the Fifth, *five*,—Hermann, Stein, Pfotenhauer, Ronthaler, Dressler. What became of all or any of them, we are unable to say.

to have something happening," he said to himself, and boiled down *King Lear* and *Hamlet* into a play of which the following is his apparently ironical account: "The plan was gigantic in the extreme; two-and-forty human beings perished in course of this piece, and in its working-out I saw myself compelled to call the greater number back as ghosts, as I should otherwise have had no characters left for its latter acts" (*P. W.* I. 4). Many anecdotes have been handed down in the family about this earliest child of his tragic muse. At one blood-curdling situation a living character is said to have approached a spectre, who warns him back in sepulchral tones: "Touch me not! for this nose of mine must fall to dust, should mortal seize it." Or again, a lady visitor inquired how far he had got with his tragedy, and was answered, "I've killed them all off but one." Jests of the latter kind were common enough with him at any period, even about the most serious subjects; but we must take these stories with a grain of salt, for it is beyond dispute that the lad was in deadly earnest with this drama. Not one of his self-imposed labours had engrossed him like this, and when he shut himself in his room with it, or even played truant for its sake, "the progeny of his fancy swarmed around him with such vigour, that he himself was scared."

While the young poet was still at work on his harrowing drama, a great change took place in his outward life. The professional duties of his sisters, with their varying stage-engagements, had much decentralised the family. Half a year back (Sept. 1826) Rosalie had requested to be released from her Dresden appointment, in which she complained of a lack of sufficient occupation, and had removed to Prague, where her efforts had already found such recognition. The public of the latter city had longed for her return as a member of their regular company, and the warmth of her second welcome was the index to a favour that increased with every week of her two-years stay (1826-28). As Emilia Galotti, Louise in *Kabale und Liebe*, Thekla in *Wallenstein*, Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Louise Cardillac in the then popular *Goldschmied von Paris* (adapted from E. T. A. Hoffmann's masterly novel, *Das Fräulein von Scudery**), she won

* At this time Hoffmann's tales were largely drawn on for the stage; thus in particular with *Meister Martin der Küfer und seine Gesellen*, in which Louise Wagner played Rosa the cooper's pretty daughter most charmingly at Breslau.

well-earned laurels; with the great tragedian Sophie Schröder as Sappho and Medea, she also took the more sympathetic parts of Melitta and Creusa, as once before at Dresden. Sister Clara too, though the early strain upon her voice forbade her appearing too frequently, had continued her career as singer by accepting an engagement at Prague (Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* forming one of her favourite parts), whence she had gone on to the newly-organised Town-theatre at Augsburg with brother Albert, who at last had terminated his engagement as actor and singer at Breslau. On the top of all these changes in the summer of 1827, came an offer from Leipzig to Louise. She had been away from the family for several years, passed in the Breslau company together with her brother; when he broke off that engagement she temporarily joined the Königstädter theatre in Berlin, but, accustomed to the warmth of her Breslau audience, found no pleasure in the atmosphere of chill Berlin, and gladly embraced the Leipzig offer. Reason enough for the mother to give up the already broken Dresden home, and return with the remnant of her family to Leipzig.

Richard soon followed them; not without the rapidly-accumulating manuscript of his grand tragedy. The latter, in effect, was nearing completion; but before he could put the last touch to it, a fresh stock of impressions and experiences was to supply him with the answer to many a riddle in its constitution.

VI.

LEIPZIG.

Quarters in the "Pichhof."—Louise's artistic successes.—She marries Friedrich Brockhaus.—Uncle Adolf and aunt Sophie.—The S. Nicholas School.—Beethoven's Symphonies and "Egmont" music.—Richard resolves to become a musician.—Intercourse with uncle Adolf.—Reading Hoffmann.—First lessons in harmony.

> *At the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts I made my first acquaintance with Beethoven's music; its impression upon me was overpowering.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

WHEN Richard reached Leipzig he found his family in pleasant quarters, arranged with all a woman's eye to comfort, in a little house (now pulled down) on what was formerly the Winter-garden, the "Pichhof" outside the Halle Gate. The thoroughfare to the inner city crossed the Brühl, and the boy accordingly had frequent opportunity of gazing at the house where he was born. It vexed him to find this region usurped by Polish Jews, who had here established their new Jerusalem and drove a roaring trade in furs. With their shaggy pelisses and high fur-caps, strange faces, long beards and pendent curls, their jumble of Hebrew and bad German, and their wild gesticulations, they at once amused and terrified him, like Hoffmann's phantoms. The old Rannstädter Thor of grandfatherly memory was standing yet, though its days were numbered; for the imposts of the General Excise had been abrogated some years since, and the carrying out of fresh improvements involved the demolition of this gate: in its place, when the moat had been filled up, an esplanade was to link the theatre directly with the Zwinger. Not far from the Pichhof lay the municipal weigh-bridge beside the old weighing-house, whose upper storey was devoted to a savings-bank and pawnbroker's,—the latter once hymned in impromptu verses by a customer:

Know'st thou the house? On pillars stands its roof,
Its presses bulge and burst with weft and woof,
And overcoats all tearful to me shout:
"O wherefore didst thou put us up the spout?"

Besides Frau Geyer and Louise, the Leipzig contingent of the family consisted of no more than the two youngest sisters, Ottilie aged sixteen and Cäcilie aged twelve, with Richard just midway between. Louise, now two-and-twenty and an uncommonly attractive young lady, had utilised the brief period of her engagement to become one of the greatest favourites on the Leipzig boards. As "Preziosa" she was made the subject of poems in the papers; Goethe's *Laune des Verliebten* owed its success in great part to her charming acting (with Frau Devrient, née Böhler, as Egle), and had to be repeated frequently; whilst in later years her brother Richard cherished memories of her "Silvana." The revival on Dec. 12, 1827, of this early work of Weber's was a triumph for Louise, and mainly through her co-öperation *Silvana* became a certain "draw," as may be seen from reports of the day. "Dem. Wagner, who played Silvana with all the magic of her naïvety and grace, was received with thunders of applause; the same distinction fell to her at the second performance," says the *Abendzeitung* of Dec. 23, 1827. "Silvana has been several times repeated; Dem. Wagner is delightful in the title-rôle. It is matter of general regret that this amiable, talented and modest artist is about to be robbed from art by a happier lot. Though she has of late had to bear with much hostility and envy from rival comedians, that surely would have soon been laid; for true merit must make its way sooner or later, and then the more brilliantly," and so forth (*Ibid.* Jan. 26, 1828). The nature of this "hostility" eludes our present knowledge, but the story of the "happier lot" was true enough: soon after removal to Leipzig, Louise had become engaged to the pushing young publisher Friedrich Brockhaus, much to Adolf Wagner's satisfaction. She was the special favourite of her uncle, who years ago had wished her "a sensible husband" in preference to stage successes, and must have been doubly rejoiced at the suitor's turning out to be the son of an old friend.

Not to lose sight of Richard for too long, we may introduce a little tale in this connection. In the *Bayreuther Taschenbuch* for 1894 Albert Heintz repeats the following from the mouth of a

friend of Cäcilie's girlhood: "At the time of Louise's courtship by the publisher Fr. Brockhaus her mother Frau Geyer was much in the company of my mamma, and I often overheard their conversation. Frau Geyer would praise Cäcilie as a great help in the extra housekeeping entailed by the daily visits of the wealthy bridegroom. One day, the maid being out, Richard also had to be pressed into the service: deep in his studies, he was horrified at the request—that a gymnasiast should go and fetch beer! At last his common sense prevailed. He came back laughing merrily, with both hands plunged in his pockets. In those days stone-bottles had handles to suspend them, and he had cut holes in his pockets to carry several unobserved. I was filled with admiration by this practical device, and thought that young man would get on in the world."

Uncle Adolf himself had given up bachelorhood in his fifty-first year, married the clever and handsome sister of his friend Amadeus Wendt on October 18, 1824, and gone to live in the "Hut" outside the Peter's-gate, away from the noise of the town.* As the marriage proved childless, but little was altered in his outer mode of life. Aunt Sophie was "gentle, conciliatory and unassuming," with the tenderest care for his comfort and wellbeing: she respected her husband's previous ties, by now become a second nature; so he made his regular excursions to the Thomä house, to see how his former fellow-inmates were faring, and paid many a visit to his brother's children. "I am still the same old horse," he writes to Albert about this time, "at liberty, my own, only belonging a little—as much as needful—to my Sophie. I'm always thinking, pondering how to take the world into my mind, and make as much as possible thereof my organ. . . . Married folk, in the lump, are but scholiasts of the book of Love, the first edition of which will ever remain a legend; meanwhile the commentators run about with traditionary fragments of it, like children with their golden bows at Christmas, and the ladies deem all reference thereto a breach of manners; although we men are

* Christiane Sophie Wendt, born at Leipzig on the first of April 1792, was consequently eighteen years younger than Adolf Wagner, whom she long survived (dying Nov. 10, 1860). After her husband's death she also appeared as a writer, under the name of Adolfine, with "Lotosblätter," three stories, 1835; "Ideal und Wirklichkeit," a novel, 1838; and two sets of fairy-tales, "Märchen und Erzählungen," in 1844 and 1846.

merely pointing to a deeper treasure that one might raise, were the incantation not so difficult."

Chief among the houses with which Adolf kept up intimacy, were the Quandt, the Träger, and the Lacarrière. Here readings aloud, particularly of Shakespeare, were a favourite pastime, in which Adolf Wagner was fond of taking the prelector's part, assisted from time to time by professional artists such as the elocutionist Solbrig. He would not hear of these reunions being treated as "shallow æsthetising," but wished them to form the focus of a higher social life, and, as he quaintly puts it, "like sweet perfumes, drive away bad vapours." The consequences of advancing years and over-application he combated by good long walks—a time-honoured recreation of his, and practised down to his sixtieth year. He found this regimen agree with him better than "physicings for the spleen, or baths devised by quacks and Nature's kitchen-prentices."

At home he was busy just now with a task that took him back to his spiritual home, the world of medieval Italy: namely his edition of the great Italian poets, the *Parnasso Italiano*, a work of most painstaking industry and thorough German erudition. This edition gives the very marrow of all previous critical commentaries on the four classical poets, Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto and Tasso, at that time more or less neglected by their own compatriots. It is ushered in by a dedication in Italian terzine, to Goethe as "principe dei poeti": the author imagines himself transported to the Garden of Poetry, where the four great Italians appear to him and endorse his admiration of Goethe, in whose works they recognise features of their own spirit; finally they encourage him to dedicate to the German poet this new collection of their works. In collating the Dante text it was the editor's endeavour to restore it to its pristine form, ridding it as much as possible of the Tuscan elegance imposed upon its noble ruggedness by the della-Cruscans. In this labour, which marks the whole edition, and presupposes the minutest knowledge of the language and its principles of versification, consists the work's peculiar merit.* Among the various annoyances attending the publication of this magnum opus, was the impossibility of giving

* "Only he who has spent many years in the study of Dante, knows rightly to estimate the enormous mass of material exploited here, and the labours of the editor," says L. G. Blanc, a contemporary reviewer of this *Parnasso*.

forth all that the editor had meant to: thus, in contravention of a promise expressed in the introduction, the indexes and bibliographic appendices had to be sacrificed to mercantile considerations, not to increase alike bulk and expense. Another unfortunate circumstance was the simultaneous appearance of a similar work in Italy, embracing the selfsame poets and bearing an almost identical title.* False patriotism, coupled with jealousy that a German should presume to understand their national poets more thoroughly than they themselves, prompted Italian pedants to fall foul of the Italian *style* of this interfering German, whilst they shut their eyes to the immense critical value of his edition. However, Adolf Wagner was richly compensated by the friendly interest shewn by Goethe; and it was in acknowledgment of this work's importance that the University of Marburg, when celebrating its tercentenary in July 1827, conferred on him the degree of "Doctor of Philosophy and Master of the Liberal Arts."

Shortly after this event in the family dates the commencement of closer relations between uncle Adolf and nephew Richard, who had arrived in Leipzig at the end of 1827. We shall return to these in a moment, first ascertaining the present condition of the youngster's mind. Indeed it was a time of inner crisis: the passion for classical studies, which had consumed the lad at the Kreuzschule, threatened to succumb at Leipzig to a "deadly false system." There were two higher schools here, the S. Nicholas and the venerable Thomana; but the latter, where both father and uncle had received their education, was just now in a state of interregnum: the old schoolhouse was going through a total transformation, from roof to cellar. Richard therefore was sent to the Nikolai-Gymnasium. "I well remember how my teachers at the S. Nicholas school entirely rooted out these tastes and likings, and moreover can explain it by the manners of those gentlemen," says the master himself in that reminiscence of his schooldays already quoted (*P. W.* V. 292); and in the Autobiographic Sketch of 1842: "At the S. Nicholas school I was relegated to the Third Class, after having already attained to the Second at the Kreuzschule. This circumstance itself embittered me so much, that I lost all liking for philologic study. I became lazy and slovenly, and my grand tragedy was the only thing left me to care about." While finishing it he came under an influence

* *Parnasso Classico Italiano*, Padua, 1827.

destined to stamp his whole future development: at the Gewandhaus Concerts he heard *Beethoven's music* for the first time in his life.

He had never heard of Beethoven before the tidings of his death (March 1827); the riddle of that death attracted him to the immortal legacy. With other masterpieces of classic instrumental music, the Symphonies of Beethoven were regularly played through every winter at the old Gewandhaus, without any actual conductor, but under the lead of the "Konzertmeister"—or "first violin"—Matthäi (died Nov. 1835). A new world dawned on the astonished youth, with an effect we may gather from the *Pilgrimage to Beethoven*, where the hero of the tale informs us: "I know not what I really was intended for; I only remember that one evening I heard a Symphony of Beethoven's for the first time, that it set me in a fever, I fell ill, and on my recovery had become a musician. This circumstance may haply account for the fact that, though in time I also made acquaintance with other beautiful music, I yet have loved, have honoured, worshipped Beethoven before all else" (*P. W.* VII. 22). A hearing of the *Requiem* brought him nearer to Mozart as well; but it was to the inexhaustible mine of Beethoven that he ever returned, and this it was that turned the conscious passion of his heart to Music.

The impressions gleaned from the Gewandhaus were supplemented by acquaintance with the music to *Egmont* at the theatre. It became clear to him that he must never let his tragedy, by now completed, "leave the stocks until provided with such music." Of his ability to compose it, he had no manner of doubt; only, he "thought just as well to make sure of a few general principles of thorough-bass first." So he borrowed Logier's "Method," and devoured it in a week. The new graft of study did not bear fruit so early as he had expected; yet its difficulties incited him, and just as he had determined off-hand to be a poet a couple of years ago, he now resolved to be *musician*. Meanwhile the grand tragedy had been unearthed by his family, much to their distress of mind; for it was plain as daylight why his school-tasks had been so wofully neglected. Small wonder that he concealed his second call till he could furnish plainer proofs in vindication: so soon as he felt sufficiently advanced in his private studies, he would come boldly forth; for the present he composed in silence—a sonata, a quartet and an aria.

In the midst of all this doubt and ferment he was thrown into closer contact with his uncle Adolf, whose stimulating presence, with his rich fund of knowledge, his breadth of view, his animated mode of address, his irony and humour, the noble expression of his face—that still preserved the traces of its earlier beauty, despite the ravages of ill-health and disappointment,—took a prominent place in these new impressions and experiences. Richard's passion for music led to many a battle with his immediate family: he must often have felt that his uncle understood him better here. And then the elder's appreciation of the great poets of every age and clime; his lively interest in matters of the Theatre, however little he might relish its "present disfigurement and perversion"; his reverence alike for Tieck and Weber, though the pair had been all but at daggers drawn in Dresden; and the serenity with which he shrugged his shoulders at his own few literary opponents! Quite recently the uncle had published his essay on "Theatre and Public," prompted by the disgraceful scenes attending the production of Calderon's "Dame Kobold" at the Dresden Court-theatre, when the audience had revolted against what they termed an attempt to force the Spanish poet down their throats, and raised such a hubbub that the actors had to leave the boards. This was the "sovereignty of the mob" against which Adolf Wagner protested; and the same voices that had been raised against Tieck's presuming to "educate" the public, now combined against himself for taking the offender's part. He was accused of absolutism: "With a banner inscribed with the name of Goethe in his upraised hand, and the cry of Tieck upon his lips, he was hieing to a windmill-tilt with the rebellious taste of the public; pretending to shew directorates the road whereon to lift the German stage from 'confirmed corruption'" (*Leipziger Litteraturzeitung*, June 12, 1827). To a like intent, but in still less bridled language, sounded the hoots of the "Midnight Journal"; but their victim held his tongue, and let the storm rage out. "I haven't many enemies," he would say, "but fortunately as many opponents as needful for my own development and ripening." In other instances he deemed it no indignity to "have a little bout with these jack-puddings. . . . But Dick, Tom and Harry, everywhere, are terribly obtuse. . . . Nowadays one can hardly call a man an ass, without being reproached for putting too fine a point on it. And those

peddlers can quarrel for the ear of such a crew? God forbid that such a thing should ever enter *your* mind!" He had a great respect for Weber's depth and versatility: "Reflect how thorough was the cultivation of Karl Maria v. Weber, and that virtuosity too often bears the curse of onesidedness. Art, like everything engendered of the spirit, is an infinitude, and must be followed on the grander scale."—He took a wide view of the world's history, and could not shut his eyes to the senility of our civilisation: "Our quarter of the globe is an over-ripe fruit, which a storm will shake down; the march of history trends towards America."—The above are phrases borrowed from Adolf's letters: by word of mouth we may be sure he expressed them to the keen young listener in a livelier, more pointed form.

From another side we have the influence of an author with whose writings Richard had commenced acquaintance in the latter part of his Dresden time. The Collected Works of E. T. A. HOFFMANN had recently appeared in a complete edition by Ed. Hitzig; here the young Beethoven-enthusiast was greeted by a conception of Music akin to that which had already glimmered on him in earliest boyhood with the mysterious accents of *Der Freischütz*. In the *Autobiographic Sketch* he tells us that this fantastic writer fired him "with the wildest mysticism. I had day-dreams in which the keynote, third and dominant, seemed to take on living form and reveal to me their mighty meaning: the notes I wrote down were raving mad." Fanciful as this account may seem, at least a quarter of a century later we find the idea repeated in a private jotting among the posthumous papers: "In the perfect Drama the full shapes of the dream vision, the other world, are projected before us life-like as by the magic-lantern. . . . Music is the lamp of this lantern" (*P. W.* VIII. 373). So that even in those early days the boy's passion for music is not for the mere surface pleasure of agreeable tone-patterns, but to him they convey a definite, a plastic or dramatic symbol, pointing to that magic region whence the musician draws "his wonder-drops of sound to dew our brain, and rob it of the power of seeing aught save the inner world," as he says in the *Beethoven* essay of 1870.

Now, his own intuitive grasp of the matter would gain ample confirmation from many a pregnant utterance of Hoffmann's, such as the suggestive improvisations of the crazy Kreisler, or the

enthusiastic debates of the Serapion brothers, where we have a plain foreshadowing of that philosophy of music which Schopenhauer was the first to crystallise and embody in a general system. But apart from all theory, there was the spell of Hoffmann's mode of story-telling, his matchless mixture of the weird and ironical, the association of a mystic awe with the immediate reality of familiar places,—Dresden for instance. The living host of his creations, from the student Anselm * to the archivist Lindhorst, from Krespel to Kreisler, invaded the brain of their youthful reader to such a point that they never left the adult master, and these stories were his constant resort in after life for freshening up the memories of his youth.

From Hoffmann came the first poetic germ of the "Minstrels' Contest at Wartburg"; Tieck's narrative of Tannhäuser also fell into young Richard's hands, presumably about this time. Though neither made a deep impression on him, it is possible that a feature here and there may have lingered in his mind till the drafting of his opera-poem some fourteen or fifteen years later. Thus the poet's dream in the introduction of Hoffmann's tale might have supplied the earliest notion for the closing tableau in the first act of *Tannhäuser*, whilst Tieck's purely episodic account of Tannhäuser's last appearance—wan, haggard, and in tattered pilgrim's-robes—might have sown the first seed of that powerful scene in the last act where the outcast narrates his fruitless pilgrimage. But we must not insist too much on suppositions of this sort, unvouched for by the master's recollections.

For the present the boy's poetic bent was subordinated to the musical, and merely "called in as aid." Thus, after a hearing of the Pastoral Symphony he set to work on a pastoral play, its

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* According to the testimony of Z. Funck in his "Life of Hoffmann," it was actually none other than Adolf Wagner that gave the first impulse to the genesis of Anselm through his translation of an English work by James Beresford, "The Miseries of Human Life" (*Menschliches Elend*, Bayreuth-Lübeck, 1810). Funck tells us: "A year before leaving Bamberg, Hoffmann found the book in my library; it entertained him so much that he read it about half a dozen times over, made extracts from it, and told me that *this book* had given him the idea of writing a tale round a character doomed by fate to spread and suffer misery wherever it went. At Dresden he resumed the idea, and turned it into the romance of *Der Goldene Topf*." The English book's sub-title, "Or the Groans of Samuel Sensitive and Timothy Testy," will supply a key to this quotation.

dramatic subject prompted by Goethe's *Laune des Verliebten;* making no attempt at a preliminary sketch, he wrote verses and music together, and left the situations to take care of themselves. By now his musical penchant had become in turn a matter of anxiety to his family, who feared it was merely a transient hobby, as he had displayed no particular gift in that direction heretofore, nor was he skilled on any kind of instrument. At last, however, he was allowed to take lessons of an able musician, Gottlieb Müller, subsequently organist at Altenburg. The poor man had no end of trouble with his pupil: "He had to convince me that what I took for curious shapes and powers were chords and intervals." For that matter, in a letter to Regisseur F. Hauser, of 1834, Wagner himself declares that his "lessons with Herr Müller were one long string of proofs of the depressingness of pedantic candour"; they had simply "hardened him against the most deterrent attacks on his youthful fervour." Moreover the whole theory of music seemed far more addressed to what one *shouldn't* do, than to what one really should: the rules he learnt were finger-posts all warning him, "No thoroughfare"; whichever way he turned, he was greeted like Tamino, or the hero of his juvenile tragedy, with an "Avaunt!" His mother was grieved to find him careless and slovenly in this branch of study also; his teacher shook his head: once again it looked as if nothing would come of him. But *he* knew better.

VII.

LEIPZIG COURT-THEATRE, AND JULY-REVOLUTION.

Court-theatre at Leipzig.—Goethe's Faust: *Rosalie Wagner as Gretchen.—Auber's* Muette: *Rosalie as Fenella.—Rossini's* Tell.—*The July Revolution makes Richard "a revolutionary."—Leipzig riots.—From the Nicholas to the Thomas School.—Overtures for grand orchestra.—Performance of the "big drum" overture at the Court-theatre.—Transference to the University.*

> *After many a digression to right and left, at the commencement of my eighteenth year of life I was confronted with the July Revolution. The effect upon me was briskly stimulant in many ways.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

THE standing theatre at Leipzig had brought the eleventh year of its existence to a close with the performance of Calderon's "Life's a dream" on May 11, 1828. Its director Küstner made some further attempts to keep the enterprise on foot, but in vain—the town-council was treating with the Government for the foundation of a *Court-theatre* at Leipzig under the supreme control of the Dresden Intendanz, though with an internal management of its own. These negotiations proving successful, on the 2nd August 1829 the theatre was re-opened with Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*.

The new undertaking at least equalled what had been achieved under Küstner's management, and for a city of second rank its performances were meritorious enough. Thus it was not without its influence on the gradually expanding mind of our hero, who had free admittance owing to the continuance of his family's connection. Louise, indeed, had said goodbye to the stage at the termination of Küstner's contract, and was already wedded to Friedrich Brockhaus (June 16, 1828); but, with the opening of the establishment as a Court-theatre, sister Rosalie had joined

the company. The last time we saw her was at the Prague theatre, where she stayed for two years, from 1826 to 1828; since leaving Prague she had accepted temporary engagements at Hamburg, Darmstadt and Cassel, but declined to bind herself to any other than her native city, where she knew that this project of a "Court-theatre" was already under way. In contemporary accounts she is uniformly described at this time as a beautiful blonde, of slim and elegant figure, with a melodious and sympathetic voice, her "cupid's head" being said to bear a striking resemblance to Henriette Sontag.*

The "Musikdirektor," or musical conductor of the new undertaking was Heinrich Dorn, appointed on the recommendation of Reissiger. Born at Königsberg in Prussia in 1804, he was only nine years older than young Wagner; his half-brother, Louis Schindelmeisser, was of the same age as Richard, who came into friendly relations with them both through their frequent attendance at F. Brockhaus' hospitable house. Dorn sprang from a well-to-do mercantile family; his late stepfather Schindelmeisser, a man of independent means, with musical and literary leanings, had given both brothers an early and careful musical education. Dorn had already profited by it to produce two operas of his composition at Berlin and Königsberg, for one of which (*Die Bettlerin*) Holtei had written the text. During his Leipzig conductorship he became a successful teacher, among his pupils in the theory of composition being Robert SCHUMANN,

* Concerning her appearance at Darmstadt (May 1828) we read in a report to the *Abendzeitung*: "Albeit this young lady had been preceded by a considerable renown, in a great variety of rôles Dem. Wagner surpassed the expectation of her audience. She has a most charming presence, a graceful figure, and a pleasant voice that goes straight to the heart. . . . Portia in the *Merchant of Venice* had been spoken of as one of our visitor's most successful efforts; and so we found it. . . . Overtures have been made by the Intendanz, to gain this distinguished young artist for our court-theatre in permanence; the public has declared in Dlle. Wagner's favour as in no other instance for a long time past." And in a report from Cassel: "Dem. Rosalie Wagner from the Hamburg Town-theatre has treated us to five different rôles, in each of which she shewed herself a thoughtful artist. Every one of these characters formed a perfect whole; but I should give the palm to her personation of Portia, as our visitor appears to have seized the finest nuances of Shakespeare's intention. . . . As I hear, this welcome guest has been offered an advantageous engagement by our directorate; let us hope she will accept it" (*Abdztg.* May 28, 1829).

who had just abandoned the study of jurisprudence for that of music, and on the vocal side Henriette Wüst, whose talent he had discovered in the Leipzig stage-chorus.* According to his own account, he took an active share in Wagner's earliest musical development, and his natural bonhomie—unclouded at that date by any envy of his junior's fame—brought the pair into an unforced attitude of protégé and patron.

The theatre had been opened with great ceremony and Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, as said, in Schlegel's translation. Rosalie had spoken the prologue, followed by a festival overture composed by Dorn, whilst the performance itself was distinguished by Rott's acting of Brutus and an excellent stage-management of the "crowd." Within four weeks occurred an event of prime importance in the Leipzig annals, namely its first performance of Goethe's *Faust*, on the poet's eightieth birthday, August 28, with Rott as Faust and Rosalie as Gretchen. As Wagner says in his *German Art and German Policy*: "The German spirit seemed inclined to shake itself up a little. Old Goethe still was living. Well-meaning literati hit upon the thought of bringing his *Faust* to the theatre. . . . The noble poem dragged its maimed and mutilated length across the boards: but it seemed to flatter the young folks, to obtain the chance of cheering many a remembered word of wit and wisdom,—and Gretchen proved a 'grateful rôle'" (*P. W.* IV. 100). Klingemann at Brunswick had been the first to transfer the mighty poem to the stage, on January the 19th of the same year; since when the larger German theatres had hastened to share in the profits of what seemed so sound an investment,—Dresden, Leipzig and Weimar each selecting this memorable birthday for the purpose. Crowds assembled for the festival from all the environs of Leipzig; an hour before the curtain's rise the house was packed to its utmost holding power with an expectant throng. A prologue by Tieck opened the evening; the performance lasted from 6 to half-past 10, without a sign of diminution in the audience's interest, despite the suffocating heat; at its close a perfect tempest of applause broke forth from patriots conscious that at this moment a similar demonstration was going

* She made her début as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* Dec. 1829; in 1833 she was transferred to the Dresden Court-theatre where she received her finishing lessons from the celebrated singing-master Miecksch, and eventually took the part of Irene at the first performance of *Rienzi*, Oct. 20, 1842.

on throughout the length and breadth of Germany. To be sure, Tieck's lavish cuts were among the smallest of the "mutilations"; was the Leipzig production not marked by an imposing final tableau, to point the moral of the catastrophe? Above poor Gretchen swayed a guardian angel with a palm, in blue light; while Faust, prostrate upon the ground, was triumphed over by a Mephistopheles aloft in flames of fire!

In the accounts of Rosalie's stage-career (of which we have a tolerably voluminous collection) her *Gretchen* is unanimously described as the most affecting and well-conceived of all her tragic rôles. In every report of this her first appearance in the part, however, we find her taxed with want of naïvety and a certain affectation; only as the play proceeded, did she warm to her work, until towards the end she gave it a resistless charm. It was precisely the same with her Cordelia in *King Lear*.* Four years later, when Gretchen had long become "a grateful rôle" to many a personatrix, Rosalie's rendering found an ardent eulogist in Heinrich Laube, particularly in respect of the mad scene: "Never have I seen Gretchen played with such intense emotion. For the first time did I feel a shiver down my spine at the outbreak of her madness; and I soon discovered why. Most actresses so put on the screw here, that it becomes an unnatural raving; they speak their lines in hollow, ghostlike tones. Rosalie Wagner spoke them with the selfsame voice as her words of love awhile before; this awful inner contrast had the most powerful effect. For a moment I felt that this superhuman grief lay beyond the scope of art, and, if madness could be so harrowingly portrayed, poets should leave off writing it."

To what extent our Richard may have become acquainted with the *Faust* poem before its Leipzig representation, we cannot ascertain; but his constant absorption in it about this time is attested by a reminiscence of one of his comrades in the second class of the S. Nicholas school, who says that Wagner always kept the book beneath his desk, and furtively would draw it out at every favouring opportunity, oblivious to whatever was going on around him. We cannot quite accept as gospel this deponent's

* "Her first scene suffered from an undue excess of naïvety; on the other hand in the catastrophe we had nature, soul, poetic inwardness of feeling, affording the most welcome evidence of a fine talent, if this artist would only give it freer rein" (*Abdtag.*).

outline of an "opera-text" said to have been contemplated by Richard in connection with the Goethian work, especially in the words somewhat adventurously put into the boy's own mouth; but there is a natural ring about the passage where Wagner jumps from one subject to the other: "Were you at the theatre last night?—*Idomeneo* is tedious. I'm sorry for the singers, having to stand alone like that by the prompter's box with their aria,—nothing near them but empty wings, and some ancient stool which they're not even allowed to sit down upon."*

Under Dorn's expert control the Leipzig Opera did not content itself with *Idomeneo*. According to the master's recollections, among the various provocatives of this period must be numbered Marschner's *Templer und Jüdin*, Spontini's *Vestale*, and Auber's *Muette*, which had just begun to take the public's ear.

Chief of these was Auber's *Muette*,—known in England as *Masaniello*,—or to give it its German title, *Die Stumme von Portici*. Fully forty years after we find the memory of its first production reviving the warmth it once had kindled in the young enthusiast for Faust and Beethoven; for Wagner always considered this the sole truly national product of the French artistic spirit. "It quite revolutionised our notions at the time," he says. "We latterly had known French Opera in none but the products of the Opéra Comique. Boieldieu had just delighted and enlivened us by his *Dame blanche*; Auber himself had entertained us most agreeably with his *Maçon*; the Paris Grand Opéra was forwarding us nothing but the stilted pathos of the *Vestale* etc., and seemed more Italian than French. . . . But a sudden change of front took place, with the coming of the *Stumme*. Here was a 'grand opera,' a complete five-act tragedy clad from head to foot in music, yet without a trace of stiffness, hollow pathos, sacerdotal ceremony, and all the classical farrago; warm to burning, entertaining to enchantment. . . . The recitatives shot lightning at us; a veritable tempest whirled us on to the ensembles; amid the chaos of wrath we had a sudden energetic cry to keep our heads cool, or a fresh command to action; then again the shouts of riot, of murderous frenzy, and between them the affecting plaint of anguish, or a whole people lisping out its prayer. Even as the subject lacked nothing of either the utmost terror or the utmost tenderness, so Auber made

* See a brief article by A. Löhn-Siegel in Kürschner's *Wagner-Jahrbuch*, 1886, "Richard Wagner auf der Nikolaischule in Leipzig."

his music reproduce each contrast, every blend, in contours and colours of so drastic, so vivid a distinctness as one could not remember having ever seen before; we might almost fancy we had actual music-paintings before us, and the idea of the musically Picturesque might easily have found substantiation here, had it not to yield to a far more apposite denomination, that of the most admirable theatric Plastique" (*P. W.* V. 40-1).—In passing, it is instructive to note how the very memory of this youthful impression takes the ripened master back to his boyish "visions."

The first Leipzig performance of the *Stumme* took place on September 28, 1829; its success was so great, that it filled the theatre twice and thrice a week for months to come. According to the *Abendzeitung* Ubrich, the Masaniello, "did better than any tenor we have seen on our boards for the last few years," especially with his acting. Rosalie played the dumb girl with more passion than people would have expected from her gentle nature, so that "the passive, suffering character wellnigh became an actively heroic. Through her impassioned rendering, and an altogether exceptional musical sense, she surprised the house by the eloquence of all her gestures, and was accompanied by one continuous volley of applause." The ensembles, the choruses and orchestra were led by Dorn with a verve that did full justice to the fire of this volcanic work; and the impression made on Richard Wagner, though it lay for some time dormant, was deep and lasting.

Very different was the effect of Rossini's *Tell*, produced at Leipzig not long after (Aug. 1830). In the article cited above, Wagner contrasts the reception of these two works in Germany: "Whoever witnessed the first appearance of the *Stumme* on the German stage, must remember the astounding sensation it created; whereas *Tell* could never really make its way." And in *German Art and German Policy* he gives the reason: "Someone in Paris had turned *Tell* into an opera-text, and no less a man than Rossini himself had set it to music. It was a question, however, whether one durst offer the German his 'Tell' as a French translated opera? . . . Every German, from the professor down to the lowest gymnasiast, even the comedians themselves, felt the shame of seeing that hideous travesty of his own best nature. But—hm! —an opera,—one doesn't take that sort of thing so seriously. The overture, with its rattling ballet-music at the end, had already been received with unexampled applause at concerts devoted to

classical music, cheek by jowl with a Beethoven Symphony. People shut one eye. And after all, this opera's goings-on were distinctly patriotic. . . . Rossini had taken great pains to compose as solidly as possible: listening to these ravishingly effective numbers, one could contrive to forget all about our 'Tell' itself" (*P. W.* IV. 100-1). As a fact attested by contemporary notices, a natural dislike of seeing the highly popular work of the German poet disguised as a French-Italian opera was at first the prevailing feeling in educated circles at Leipzig; despite the splendid mounting "the audience seemed bored," as we read in the *Abendzeitung* of September 1830: "The great expectations long aroused by this opera have been justified by neither its music nor its text. Poor Schiller, to have had his noble drama suffer such a wretched transformation! Immoderate length impelled the management to effect omissions at the two immediately succeeding performances. Nevertheless the audience seemed bored, and applause was faint throughout. The more the pity that no expense had been spared on the outward trappings of scenery and costume." A comparison with this work's reception at Dresden about the same time may prove instructive: at the one place apathy, at the other enthusiasm; here strenuous cutting, there spreading of the opera over two evenings, not to lose a fraction of its musical delights. Plainly the sentiment of the Leipzig public was saner, in those days, than that of the Saxon capital with its many years of Italianisation.

But this resultful 1830 soon brought quite other factors into play. Political events had already roused the ardent spirit of young Wagner from time to time, and always won his lively sympathy for the suffering side. Now came the second Paris revolution: the event that set all Europe in commotion was the stroke that made of him "a revolutionary at one blow." Very likely the *Stumme* had something to do in preparing him for it. Just as it put an end to the mere life-of-pleasure of the Restoration, artistically speaking, and began to shake Rossini's throne, it might well be regarded as virtually "the stage precursor of the July Revolution," as which indeed it actually figured in the case of Belgium. However, it would be a mistake to imagine the seventeen-year-old Wagner guided in his views of *life* by specifically artistic tenets. The opposite was in fact the case, even so early as this. In his *Communication* he refers to his own evolution as follows:—"That which first determines the *artist* as such, is certainly the purely

artistic impression. If his receptive force be completely engrossed thereby, the impressions receivable from life thereafter will find his capacity already exhausted; he will develop as absolute artist, along the line which we must designate the feminine . . . where art plays with itself, drawing sensitively back from every brush with actual life. . . . The case is otherwise where the previously developed artistic force has merely formed and focussed the faculty for receiving life's impressions; where, in place of weakening, it has the rather strengthened it. . . . This is the masculine, the generative line of art."

Since our hero has designated this particular "impression" as one of the turning-points in his life, we may deal at somewhat greater length with the events that occurred in Leipzig at the beginning of September 1830 in consequence of the Parisian July-revolution; events that happened under Richard's eyes, and, involving his own brother-in-law Friedrich Brockhaus, bore quite a personal interest. For a long time past there had been brewing a sullen opposition to the department of criminal-justice and police, at whose head then stood a certain Herr von Ende as Police-president and Royal Commissary. The entire organisation of this department was held to be as extravagant as it was faulty; people spoke of enormous sums devoured yearly, and the maintenance of a wholly unnecessary town-guard, so easily to be replaced by a moderate garrison. Grave scandals of all kinds, such as the systematic establishment of gambling-hells under the auspices of the magistracy and the protection of the police—to say nothing of the smaller tripots, locally known as "Ratten"—, roused public ire. An extraordinary commission of inquiry was awaited from Dresden, but delay in despatching it increased the natural impatience; the labouring class was incensed at a wanton neglect of its interests in the farming out of orders for communal works; the students were offended by an order of the Royal Commissary derogatory to the Rector of the university, and demanded unconditional restoration to the academic senate of its jurisdiction over undergraduates. Thus in every class of the inhabitants there was an accumulation of inflammable material; small causes led to open conflicts with police-agents and gens-d'armes. On the 2nd of September a family in the Brühl were holding a wedding-eve carouse, or "Polterabend," which attracted a crowd to the quarter; the police interfered, but were driven

back with bleeding heads by a knot of brawny smiths. Late in the evening, just as a lunar eclipse became total, the streets were plunged into darkness by smashing of lamps; the mob rushed off to the house of the President of Police, broke his windows for him, hooted several members of the town-council, and so forth. The turmoil of the next few days was great: in defiance of all censorship, the most seditious attacks on the Police and Council were published in the newspapers and by means of placards. The student-corps "Saxonia" assembled its members in conference; labourers and mechanics from the environs and farther still swarmed into the city by hundreds, and at dusk filled the streets and market-place with threatening groups. The windows of unpopular magistrates were broken in, the interior of their houses wrecked by stones—the roads being completely stripped of paving in many places. A picket of cavalry patrolled the town; it suffered no bodily harm, but was too weak, and without orders to use force.

Still larger were the crowds on the evening of September the 4th, when brilliant moonshine lit the inroads of the rioters. The release of prisoners taken by the police during the last day or two was effected by superior force; divided into several bands, the mob tore shouting through the streets, scattered the police-patrols, broke uproariously into the houses of officials belonging to the police and council, and destroyed or flung out of window their furniture and effects. A few houses of ill-fame in the suburbs, known to be the resort of certain magistrates, were razed to the ground in a few hours with the help of crowbars; a like fate overtook the villa of Banker and Town-architect Erkel at Gohlis. Not that there was any thought of plunder: it was simply the act of popular vengeance; thieves caught were promptly punished by the rioters themselves. One special object of malevolence was the machinery so hateful at that time to handicraftsmen; a raging crowd drew up before the Brockhaus printing-house, to wreck its mechanical presses. Friedrich Brockhaus' courage saved the situation; he laid the storm by representing that he gave employment to a hundred and twenty men per day, and promising that the machines should be stopped for the next four weeks.

The following Sunday morning saw a renewal of tumult and destruction. At last, after a solemn conclave at the Rathhaus,

the city armed itself, forming a provisional Municipal and National Guard under the command of Town-captain Frege, whilst the university accorded its students the right to carry arms, and conjured them to share in defending the town against anarchy. The day before, rector Krug had set free on parole a few students detained in the academic lock-ups for other offences, to give the rabble no excuse for acts of liberation; this Sunday he summoned his senate and all the students to the university-chapel in the Paulinum after morning service, strongly impressed on them the need of actively contributing to the preservation of peace and order, and received their unanimous assent. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, in six armed companies with white bandelets on the arm and the password *Leges et ordo*, the students trooped out of the Pauline courtyard, patrolled the streets alternately with the rifle-bands and municipal guard, and shared with them the task of keeping watch and ward. Police and soldiers having disappeared, the city-gates were guarded by armed students, proud in the consciousness of their public service, and prompt to avert fresh excesses by good-humoured words.

Meantime the Commissioners had arrived, and were doing their best to calm the still-excited populace by reasonable inquiries and provisions. The word "police" was proscribed; apart from the criminal department, a "Deputation of Safety" was enrolled from among the authorities of the university, the city and surrounding district. But the most important step of all, spreading joy throughout the whole of Saxony, was the prompt elevation of the enlightened and popular Prince Friedrich—subsequently King Friedrich August II.—to co-regency with King Anton; Cabinet-minister von Einsiedel being at like time dismissed and a whilom member of the Diet, von Lindenau, appointed in his stead. The proclamation was read in Leipzig at midday of the 15th of September; at night the whole town was brilliantly illuminated. The rifle-bands, the citizens and students paraded the streets with music; on the esplanade they raised a rousing cheer for the well-loved prince; the rejoicings continued till long after midnight. People flattered themselves that a new era of civic life had begun in their Saxony.

All these stirring incidents, particularly the students' intervention and final triumph of the popular cause, found a lively echo in young Richard's breast. Nor did his keen interest in public

events meet with any opposition on the part of his family. Even the old uncle rejoiced at the signs of awakening public spirit, and waxed eloquent about the manifold good the Leipzig "revolutionlet" had brought with it, in that "amid a state of universal lethargy many a wholesome truth had come to tongue, and the criminally self-sufficient materialism of the commercial world been sent to the dogs. In higher regions there had been a display of good and upright will, and even though discords of the old aristocratic club-law had sounded too, they were destined, as in music, to be resolved by counterpoint." Simultaneous risings all over the fatherland, in Brunswick, Hesse, Hanover etc., confirmed the lad in his nascent faith in the triumph of liberalism; as he says in 1842, with perhaps a tinge of over-colouring, "I came by the conviction that every decently active being should occupy himself exclusively with politics. I was only happy in the company of political writers, and commenced an overture on a political theme."

His days at the S. Nicholas school had come to end. The famous old Thomana had been reopened on November 29 of the previous year, with a brilliant celebration of its centenary, in the new building for whose completion the town authorities had shirked no cost; in the autumn of 1830 Richard Wagner, who had never got beyond the second class in the Nikolai, entered the first of the S. Thomas school. Nevertheless all zest for systematic school-work had been killed out of him: he preferred writing overtures for grand orchestra. It needed no great pressure to induce Dorn to perform one of them, in B flat, $\frac{6}{8}$ time, at the Court-theatre. "I still can see the little octavo score, neatly written in two different-coloured inks and grouped into three systems for the strings, wood-wind and brass," says Dorn more than thirty years later; "it bore in it the germs of all those grand effects which at a later date were to set the whole musical world by the ears." To be exact, Wagner had written it out in *three* different colours, for the better understanding of those who might wish to study his score: the strings in red, the wood-wind in green, and the brass in black. Of this work the lad was mighty proud, though in after years he called it the culminating point of his folly: "Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was a mere Pleyel Sonata by the side of this strangely complicated overture." There really lay no small significance in that marshalling of the instru-

ments: the division of the orchestra into three distinct constituent bodies, the strings, the wood-wind and the brass (instead of their former arbitrary fusion according to conventional rules); their grouping into *families*, with careful adjustment of the tone-colour to the various characters and situations of the drama,—is one of the most marked of Wagner's innovations, and strikes the eye at the first glance down a page of his scores. The parallels first followed in this early work must inevitably lead in course of time to his system of triads of a similar timbre, and his weaving with them instruments erewhile employed apart, till at last he gave the orchestra a power of expression unmatched for clearness and variety.*

When Dorn commenced to rehearse this fledgeling he had some trouble in overcoming the opposition of his band. Old Konzertmeister Matthäi at its head, the whole orchestra was convulsed with laughter, and declared the unknown young gentleman's overture arrant nonsense. However, as the conductor insisted on it, the work was "thoroughly rehearsed in the morning, and played through pat at night." The effect was not at all improved by a fortissimo thump on the big drum recurring at every fifth bar; at first astonished at the drummer's pertinacity, the audience soon shewed symptoms of impatience, and finally exploded with most disconcerting mirth. "The puzzled public couldn't make it out," says Dorn, "when the players suddenly laid down their instruments, after a protracted hurly-burly; it still had hoped that some nice bit would come at last. Yet there was something in this composition that compelled my respect, and I consoled its visibly dejected author with assurance of the future." According to another version of Dorn's—which we must leave the reader to reconcile with the above as best he can,—Wagner joined heartily in the general laughter at his firstborn, and agreed that its fate was deserved. The composer himself merely says, "This first performance of a composition of my own left a great impression on me." Next day he called on Dorn to thank him, when the latter assured him that he had been struck with his talent and was especially pleased not to have had to *alter* a single note, as needed almost always in the orchestration of beginners' works. Moreover a kindly notice of the overture is

* See Liszt's *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser de Richard Wagner*, Leipzig 1851, pp. 106-7.

said to have been inserted, at Dorn's suggestion, in a journal called the "Comet," edited by Herlossohn.

The youth's first brush with publicity had by no means damped his spirits, and he determined to pursue his path. He felt himself no more a boy, and very soon exchanged the restraint of school for the freer atmosphere of student-life. In fact he did not wait for the Thomana term to end at Easter, for we find him inscribed as student at the University of Leipzig on the 23rd of February 1831,—a step taken with no idea of devoting himself to any learned profession, as his musical career was already resolved on, but with the desire of widening his artistic horizon by a course of "philosophy and æsthetics."

VIII.

THE STUDENT OF MUSIC.

The university.—A "smollis" offered to the Senior of the Saxonia.—Student excesses.—Return to music.—Study with Weinlig: his method.—Immersed in Beethoven.—Personal relations.—Three overtures.—Polish emigrants.—Overtures in D minor and C at the Gewandhaus.

> *These impressions, of the July Revolution and the struggling Poles, were not as yet of perceptible formative influence on my artistic development; they were stimulators only in a general sense. Indeed, so much was my receptive faculty still dominated by purely artistic impressions, that it was precisely at this perioa that I occupied myself the most exclusively with music, wrote sonatas, overtures, and a symphony.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

THE Leipzig "student" was clothed by the moving events of the year 1830 with a nimbus that eclipsed even the glory wherewith he had been invested in the eyes of his enthusiastic reader by the magic of Hoffmann's fancy. In the days of uproar and disquiet the Student had proved himself a trustworthy member of the community, while punctiliously asserting his own imperilled rights. On the day of announcement of Prince Friedrich's regency a public declaration had been made by the Royal Commissaries sent from Dresden, to the effect that the students would in future be under the supervision of a re-organised police. But that had been the very ground of their commotion: stung to the quick, the youngsters left the watch they still were keeping since the days of danger, tore the placards down from walls and street-corners, and marched under arms, to the number of three or four hundred, to the quarters of the Royal Commissaries von Karlowitz and Meissner. Six of them stepped out of the ranks, and stated their collective grievances in a solemn address, encouraged and applauded by the burghers gathered in the street. They succeeded in obtaining the repeal of the objectionable decree: the interference of the

President of Police was done away with, a strong directorate of the University appointed from the academic Senate, and, to obviate friction between the students themselves, "a Seniorat" was constituted of the Seniors of the various student-corps, responsible solely to the Rector and Senate. Rector Krug, whose presence of mind had directed the young men's energy into the proper path, and kept it within the bounds of order, was presented by the citizens with a loving-cup in honour of the great reform; whilst the students were favoured by the young ladies of Leipzig with an embroidered banner.

Our hero's craving for the university must have dated from somewhere about this period. Indeed we learn on the authority of A. von Wurzbach ("Zeitgenossen," Vienna 1871) that Wagner much affected the manners and society of students in the latter months of his school-time. Now, if the so-called "Fuchs" was an object of the loftiest condescension to the full-blown Student, what shall be said of a mere aspirant to the university, not yet matriculated, not even a "Fox"?* But young Wagner was not to be deterred from frequenting the students' haunts, aping their customs, and using their slang; in fact, he so far forgot himself as to offer a "smollis" † to that dreaded personage, the Senior of the Saxonia. There was the devil to pay for his impudence. However, this Senior soon discovered that the young man was a cut above the ordinary, and made no further bones about admitting him to brotherhood, though he coupled it with one condition: "Within a month you produce your matriculation papers, or are sent to Coventry." The tale goes on that Richard returned in triumph at the end of a week, greeting his brother Senior with "It's all right now; I've got the papers in my pocket." "Out with them!" replied the Senior, and was confronted by "Student of Music." This unprecedented designation—the Leipzig Conservatorium not having as yet come into being—evoked loud peals of laughter from the "hoary head"; but the duly-authorised Fox was not to be put off; he claimed and received his Fox baptism *in optima forma*, a solemn feast from which he was conducted home by his faithful senior in the small hours of the morning.

This being the only plausibly recorded episode from Wagner's

* See Appendix.

† Or "Schmollis"—student slang for brotherhood pledged by clinking glasses.

student-life,* we give it for what it is worth, though it presents the failings common to all such anecdotes: on the one hand, the immoderate prominence of the narrator,—with whom, in the first instance, we may safely identify that worthy "senior" himself; on the other, the absence of a single really individual trait to stamp it with the personality of Richard Wagner. From the story, however, we may glean these three facts: that the student-glamour was greatest for him when he stood without; that nothing less than intimacy with the head of the crack corps of the day could satisfy the youngster's sense of his own importance; and finally, that his longing for the rank of actual Student made him anticipate the usual term and hasten his matriculation—as proved by the date of his inscription (Feb. 23, 1831). The "peals of laughter from the hoary head" assuredly owed their origin not so much to the surprising novelty of the designation chosen, as to that far deeper misconception of which Beethoven himself had been unable to rid the layman's mind. "In my time," says Wagner once in joke, "the Leipzig students made a butt of a poor devil whom they would get to declaim his poems in return for the settling of his score. They had his portrait lithographed, above the motto: 'Of all my sufferings Love is cause.'" It is tolerably certain that that "hoary head" would have been far more prone to class Music with the sentimental lyrics thus ridiculed, than to allow it a serious place beside the hall-marked scientific "faculties"; throughout his life it was in his own person, and in virtue of his individuality, that Wagner had to prove that it was no question here of a feminine, but in very truth a *masculine* art. If we were to strike out the influence of Richard Wagner from the post-classical development of German music, what meaning would this latter have for the non-musician?

As Immermann has aptly said, in all those "swaggering, hectoring students there lurks the grub of the future Philistine," and it is not in their ranks one must seek the budding geniuses and kindling lights of the world. Not that Wagner was at all inclined to dispense with his share of the fun, while the humour

* Praeger tells a story, garbled from an alleged conversation of Wagner's concerning an adventure in one of those gambling-hells which had survived the Leipzig fracas of September; for the true account, as also its proper connection, we must await the publication of the master's memoirs.

lasted: what of wit and fancy the revels of the students of those days fell short in, he amply made up from his own resources; but he took the tempo of the usual academic excesses—to use his own words—"with such reckless levity, that they very soon revolted him." The deeper he plunged in the mire, the more convinced he became that the narrow round of sottish follies, which was all that remained after the bloom of civic distinction had worn off, could never satisfy his needs. To perceive this and to turn his back forever on the twofold stage of student prowess, the pothouse and the duel-ground, for him were one thing and the same.

His people had had "great trouble with him" about this time; he had almost completely forsaken his music. Not only that: of the opportunity of regular attendance on philosophic and æsthetic lectures he profited as little as Goethe, for instance, during the time of his Leipzig studies. It was not entirely his fault, for the Leipzig philosophers and æsthetes of those days could in no case have been of much service to him; almost at the selfsame time as Richard Wagner was seeking in vain for the proper guide to a philosophic grasp of problems in art and life, Arthur Schopenhauer said goodbye to the Berlin University and his brief career as lecturer, because of the impossibility of finding the proper hearers for his teachings! Thus the youth had to fall back on the light of nature for his view of things, and, sick of his madcap wanderings, returned to his senses. He felt the instant necessity of a strict and regular study of *music*, and providence directed him to the right man.

That man was Christian THEODOR WEINLIG, cantor at the S. Thomas school in Leipzig since 1823.* He set bit and bridle on the riotous fancy of his pupil, and gave his mobile brain due

* Weinlig died in March 1842, at the age of sixty-one. Had he lived but seven or eight months longer, he might have witnessed the production of *Rienzi* at Dresden, and satisfied himself as to that "self-dependence" for which he had prepared his pupil; in all probability he would have shaken his head at the work, but certainly would have shewn a better understanding of it than did his successor at the Thomas-school, the fairly well-known Moritz Hauptmann. His wife would appear to have taken a good deal of interest in the young musician at the period when he came to their house for his daily lesson, and Wagner's gratitude to her is proved by the dedication of his *Liebesmahl der Apostel* in 1843 "To Frau Charlotte Emilie Weinlig, widow of his never-to-be-forgotten teacher."

equipoise. The young musician had already tried his hand on fugues, but it was with Weinlig that he first began a sound study of counterpoint. In the letter of 1834 to Regisseur Franz Hauser already-cited Wagner gives a retrospect of this course of study: "Weinlig must have felt at once where lay my chief deficiency; he put a stop at first to my learning counterpoint, to ground me thoroughly in harmony. In this he took me through the strict and closer style, and would not budge from it till he thought me quite sure of my footing; for he held that this solid style was the sole foundation alike for handling freer and richer harmonies, and, in all essentials, for learning counterpoint. Then he gave me the firmest grounding in the strictest principles of the latter, and after he felt that I was quite at home in this most difficult field of musical study he discharged me with the words: 'I now release you from your lessons, as a pupil who has learnt everything his master could teach him.'" His account is corroborated by a reminiscence of sister Cäcilie's, how Weinlig paid a call one day during this six-months course: much to the mother's alarm, who feared a repetition of the old, old story, the worthy gentleman began with "I have felt it my duty to pay you a visit," but pleasantly surprised her by continuing, "of congratulation upon the wonderful progress made by your son. What it was in my power to teach the young man, he already knows wellnigh of himself,—'tis quite remarkable!"

As to Weinlig's mode of teaching, Mr Edward Dannreuther in his admirable article in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* gives the following report of what Wagner told him in 1877:— "Weinlig had no special method, but he was clear-headed and practical. Indeed you cannot *teach* composition; you may shew how music gradually came to be what it is, and thus guide a young man's judgment, but this is historical criticism, and cannot directly result in practice. All you can do, is to point to some working example, some particular piece, set a task in that direction, and correct the pupil's work. This is what Weinlig did with me. He chose a piece, generally something of Mozart's, drew attention to its construction, relative length and balance of sections, principal modulations, number and quality of themes, and general character of the movement. Then he set the task:—you shall write about so many bars, divide into so many sections with modulations to correspond so and so, the themes shall be so

many, and of such and such a character. Similarly he would set contrapuntal exercises, canons, fugues—he analysed an example minutely and then gave simple directions how I was to go to work. But the true lesson consisted in his patient and careful inspection of what had been written. With infinite kindness he would put his finger on some defective bit and explain the why and wherefore of the alterations he thought desirable. I readily saw what he was aiming at, and soon managed to please him. He dismissed me, saying, 'You have learnt to stand on your own legs.' My experience of young musicians these forty years has led me to think that music should be taught all round on such a simple plan. With singing, playing, composing, take it at whatever stage you like, there is nothing so good as a proper example, and careful correction of the pupil's attempts to follow that example."

Under Weinlig the young man acquired an intimate knowledge and love of MOZART, though it was put to a severe test by the orchestral performances at the Gewandhaus concerts: "things that had seemed so full of life and soul when reading the score, or at the pianoforte, I scarcely recognised in the form wherein they skimmed before the audience. Above all, I was astonished at the mawkishness of the Mozartian cantilena, which I had imagined so full of charm and feeling. . . . My genuine delight in Mozart's instrumental works remained in abeyance till I had occasion to conduct them myself, and thus to follow my own feeling of the animation demanded by his cantilena" (*P. W.* IV., 299, 300).

Among his tasks of this period was the writing of an "extremely simple and modest" pianoforte Sonata in B flat, four movements, in which he freed himself "from all shoddy," but repressed his inner promptings; at Weinlig's request it was printed by Breitkopf und Härtel, simultaneously with a Polonaise in D for four hands.* Neither work affords an inkling of the

* In a list of "New music published by Breitkopf und Härtel, Leipzig, Easter 1832," under the heading of Pianoforte Solos we find "Wagner, R., Sonata, 20 gr.," and in that of Pianoforte Duets, "Wagner, R., Polonaise Op. 2, 8 gr." (see the "Litterarisches Notizenblatt, Nr. 20" of June 9, 1832, a supplement to No. 138 of the Dresden *Abendzeitung*). The title-pages of the original edition have been reproduced, on a slightly smaller scale, in Jos. Kürschner's *Wagner-Jahrbuch* of 1886. The Sonata bears the dedication, "To Herr Theodor Weinlig, Cantor and Musikdirektor at the Thomasschool in Leipzig, respectfully dedicated by Richard Wagner."

later Wagner, but they have a unique interest as being his earliest publications and bearing the conventional "opus" number,—a fashion he never adopted again. It would be impossible, so Dorn says, to detect in this sterile sonata a single trace of the author of its extraordinary predecessor, that amazing overture. The more the pity that the Sibyl should have saved the one, and not the other. However, in compensation for his self-restraint, Weinlig allowed the lad to write a piece at his own sweet will. Thus arose a Fantasia for the pianoforte in F sharp minor, hitherto unpublished, but described by W. Tappert as far more interesting and characteristic than the Sonata and Polonaise.

The Fantasia was followed in the same half-year by a Concert-overture in D minor (Sept. 26, 1831,—revised Nov. 4, 1831) composed "on the model of Beethoven, which I now understood somewhat better." Says Dorn, "I doubt if there has ever been a young composer more familiar with the works of Beethoven, than the eighteen-year-old student Wagner. He owned the greater part of the master's overtures in score, copied by his own hand; with the sonatas he went to bed, and rose with the quartets; the songs he sang, the quartets he whistled (for he couldn't make headway with his playing): in short, it was a veritable *furor teutonicus*." Wagner himself puts his enthusiasm into the mouth of his German Musician in Paris: "I knew no other pleasure than to plunge so deep into the genius of Beethoven, that at last I fancied myself become a portion thereof; and as this tiniest portion I began to respect myself, to come by higher thoughts and views—in brief, to develop into what sober people call an idiot." Still later in life he recalls his midnight porings over these "cryptic pages" in the silence of his garret in the Pichhof, and declares that to them he owed what no teacher in the world could have given him, a practical initiation into the sacred mysteries of Beethoven, and in particular of the Ninth Symphony. He had made himself a pianoforte arrangement of this latter work, and his surprise may be imagined when he heard the symphony performed by the Gewandhaus orchestra—as an occasional point of honour—and could make neither head nor tail of the jumble of sounds.

Two memorable letters afford us a glimpse into this period of burning the midnight oil before the shrine of Beethoven. The one, dated August 6, 1831, is addressed to C. F. Peters' Bureau

de Musique at Leipzig: in it young Wagner desires, "for lack of occupation," to be employed on proof-correcting and pianoforte-arrangements; he offers to furnish exemplars gratis, guarantees accuracy and punctuality, and signs himself "Richard Wagner, *stud. mus.*" The other, dated October 6, is addressed to the firm of Schott in Mainz, and treats of no less an undertaking than a pianoforte-arrangement of the Ninth Symphony: "I long have made the glorious last symphony of Beethoven the object of my deepest study," writes young Wagner, "and the better I became acquainted with the work's high worth, the more has it distressed me to find it still so misconstrued, so terribly neglected, by the musical public. The way to make this masterwork more popular, to me appeared to be a proper version for the pianoforte, such as I much regret to say I have never met as yet; (for that four-handed arrangement of Czerny's can scarcely be called satisfactory). In keen enthusiasm I therefore ventured on an attempt to prepare this symphony for *two hands*, and have succeeded thus far in arranging its first and wellnigh hardest section with as much clearness and fulness as possible. Accordingly I now approach your respected firm to ascertain whether you would feel disposed to accept such an arrangement. For, naturally, I should not care to proceed with so arduous a task without that certainty. So soon as I shall be assured of this, I will immediately set to work and finish what I have commenced. I therefore beg for an early answer" etc., to be addressed "Leipzig, at the Pichhof, outside the Halle Gate, first floor." The answer was by no means "early," for it did not arrive until two months later, namely December 8, 1831; and, much as we may sympathise with the young man's efforts to contribute to his own support, we cannot but be grateful that it was in the negative—like other replies to his repeated offers—and he thus was kept for something better. Meanwhile, not only had the arrangement of the Ninth Symphony been completed for his private delectation, but he had composed and instrumented in the selfsame key, D minor, the unpublished Overture already mentioned. Its first fair copy, of September 26, falls between the two letters just quoted; its revision, Nov. 4, in the interval between the letter to Schott and its rejoinder. In a second Concert-overture, the composition of which he appears to have also finished before the close of the year, he exchanged the gloomy minor key for the cheeriness of C major.

His musical activity did not preclude his mercurial nature from enjoyment of the society of friends. We have already referred to his intercourse with Dorn—whose pupil Robert Schumann was at that time—and his younger half-brother, Schindelmeisser; among his student comrades we have to make special mention of Guido Theodor Apel, just two years older than himself, who had been with him at the Nikolai, and left it to become a student of Law at the Leipzig University at the same time as Wagner. In Heinrich Kurz's History of German Literature (IV., 619-20) we read that, after the untimely death of his father, August Apel, this young man "had received in the house of his cultured mother a careful education by Gottfried Fink, a well-known writer on music and editor of the *Allg. musikal. Ztg.* Richly blest with earthly goods and gifted with a lively fancy, he cultivated poetry and music with especial ardour, much assisted by the heartiest friendship with Richard Wagner and other composers."

In Richard's family circle, sister Clara had been married two years since at Magdeburg (where she was following her career as singer) to operatic regisseur and singer Wolfram; but Rosalie remained the centre of attraction, together with her two engaging sisters, Ottilie the blonde and Cäcilie the brunette. The mother's house maintained its reputation as a meeting-place for many leading figures in art and literature, whilst visits to sister Louise Brockhaus, who had already become the happy mother of a little Marianne, were frequent as ever. So that there was no lack of enlivening company, little parties and excursions, etc. Indeed until fifteen years back there stood—perhaps still stands—an old inn at Eutritzsch near Leipzig, then known by the nickname of the "Klavierschenke" (subsequently, Alte Oberschenke) through its possession of a pianoforte, where Wagner remembered having danced in his student days and improvised for others to dance to.

With the best will in the world, on the other hand, we are unable to regale the reader with interesting anecdotes of Richard's "first love." True that, to fill this aching void in the master's youthful history, F. Praeger gives alleged particulars from Wagner's mouth; but the whole tale is sheer romancing, coloured with the author's racial passion for dragging in the Jews,—as we shall subsequently find to be the case with the Paris "Louis." Beyond doubt the young man's heart was vulnerable, and in more than *one* direction, as may be judged from the fact that the honour of

having been the object of his tenderer feelings has since been claimed in several quarters. We here need only mention Marie Löwe, eventually mother of the two celebrated singers Lili and Marie Lehmann. At this time a member of the opera-company (see Dorn's *Ergebnisse*, p. 150), she had come to Leipzig in 1830 as a beginner, became acquainted with Wagner through his sisters, and got him to accompany her on the pianoforte in her vocal practices. Richard is *said* to have conceived an "infatuation" for her, which she did not return in consequence of his "very morose and melancholy frame of mind"! The one thing certain, is that Frau Lehmann always retained a sincere affection for the master during her ensuing career at the Cassel Court-theatre, at its prime under Spohr, and as harpist in the orchestra of the German National-theatre at Prague after her retirement from the stage; whilst Wagner, on his side, preserved for her a special friendship and esteem. It was she, who sent to him at Zurich a full account of the Prague successes of his *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, directing his attention to the signal achievement of Frau Dustmann (then Frl. Louise Meyer) as Elsa; and at the beginning of the seventies, when occupied with his first preparations for the Bayreuth enterprise, the master did not forget to apply to his staunch old friend for the co-operation of her two best pupils, her daughters named above.

To turn to the more historic influences at work on the young man, we find him deeply interested in the struggles and sufferings of the downtrod Poles, just as a year or so back he had been fascinated by the July Revolution and its Leipzig epilogue. In the autumn and winter of 1831 came the last tragic throes of the Polish rebellion, so hopefully begun: Warsaw had been taken by the Russian army under Paskewitsch; a portion of the Polish host, cut off by the Russians, had laid down its arms on the Galician frontier; the remainder of the Polish army, one-and-twenty thousand strong, had crossed over into Prussia. With tears the bearded riders embraced their horses for the last time, flung themselves sobbing to the ground, and broke the swords or sprung the muskets they might use no more in service of their fatherland. Thousands resolved to seek in foreign lands a new home and centre whence to stir up interest in their nation; the larger number found hospitable sanctuary in France; others went to England or America, to Belgium or Algiers, or scattered far and

wide. Toward the year's end the refugees began their march through Germany, and on the 8th of January 1832, a brilliant winter's day, the first detachment reached Leipzig. A league from the town they were met by an expectant crowd; at the outer Grimma Gate the cheers of many thousand voices welcomed them. The whole length of the broad Steinweg was packed with people who had no other thought, for the moment, than how to prove to these unhappy wanderers their hearty sympathy. The Poles could not find words enough to express their joy and gratitude, and tears flowed fast on either side. Accompanied by a cheering multitude, the emigrants traversed the city to the inns which a charitable "Poles-Committee" of wealthy citizens had had prepared for their reception.

In view of the great excitement caused among the populace, it was arranged that the succeeding columns should not march through the town, but make a wide detour towards the Rannstadt Gate, near which stood the inn that was to put up the most of them. However, the number of private families who declared their readiness to take in a refugee or two for the four-and-twenty hours allowed them soon increased to such a point that there were days on which but a handful, out of a column of 90 to 120 men, had to be accommodated in the hostelries. The students figured among the most enthusiastic, exchanging souvenirs, the kiss of brotherhood, or vows of eternal friendship; those of them who had not means or room to house an emigrant, at least sought out his company, and listened breathless to his tales of heroism. Among these latter was Richard Wagner, who tells us in *The Work and Mission of my Life* of his personal acquaintance with Polish emigrants, fine, stalwart men, who filled him with deep pity for their fatherland's sad fate.

Each afternoon the strangers made a pilgrimage to the monument of Poniatowsky in the Gerhard Garden; from the wreaths that decked the simple masonry they would pluck a flower, and hoard it up as if sprung from the actual grave of the unfortunate prince. Wherever they appeared in public they were received with all possible respect; not only were balls and parties given in their honour, but a Grand concert at the Gewandhaus, when the "Denkst du daran" figured as a concert-piece, yielded a very material contribution to their sustentation-fund. A most striking scene was presented at seven each morning of the day after their

arrival, on their departure from their head-quarters, the inn of the Green Shield; it was all life and bustle, cries and counter-cries, questions and answers, now in Polish, now in French, and again in German—which last was spoken by an astonishing proportion of the strangers; there seemed no end to vows of gratitude, to touching farewells, repeated promises of tidings to be sent from here or there to their new-found friends.

So it went on for the greater part of the month of January. In February merely a few stragglers passed through the town, but the arrival was still awaited of several columns of officers and some thousands of men in batches of five-hundred apiece, as to whose transit Artillery General Bem, the hero of Ostrolenka, was in treaty with the district authorities. In fact the tide of emigration was not yet spent, as we may gather from a report of March 1832, "Everybody in Leipzig is aflame for the Poles"; and it is from these rousing days that dates the inspiration for Wagner's overture "Polonia," though it was not to be realised until 1836, at Königsberg.

For the present, in the words of this chapter's motto, artistically these impressions were "stimulators only in a general sense." The overtures in D minor and C major, already mentioned, were followed by a third that owed its origin to Raupach's blood-and-thunder tragedy *King Enzio*, then storming every German stage; its manuscript is dated February 3, 1832. Raupach's piece, in which Rosalie played the Lucia di Viadagoli, accordingly had the honour at its repeated Leipzig performances (commencing the middle of February) of being ushered in by an overture expressly composed for it by Richard Wagner. The next larger work to engage his attention was a grand Symphony in C, composed somewhere about the month of March; as it is the first, and only completed work of this order ever penned by Wagner, we shall return to it at greater length in the succeeding chapter.

Meanwhile the 16th subscription-concert at the Gewandhaus, of February 23, had been opened with the D minor Overture.*

* A photographic reduction of the original programme will be found in Kürschner's *Wagner-Jahrbuch* (1886, p. 371), together with the above extract from a report in No. 18 of the *Allg. mus. Ztg.* (editor, G. W. Fink; pub., Breitkopf und Härtel) of May 2, 1832. The programme simply says "*Ouverture*, von Richard Wagner"; neither it nor the report states the *key*, which has been erroneously given in the *Jahrbuch* as C major.

"We were much pleased," says the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, "with a new overture by a very young composer, Herr Richard Wagner. The piece was thoroughly done justice to, and indeed the young man shews great promise; his composition not only sounds well, but has grit in it, and has been worked out with skill and diligence, with a visible and successful aim at the most honourable mark. We have looked through the score." The audience also was warm in its acknowledgment, and the young artist reaped the double advantage, of that experience which is only to be gained from an actual hearing of one's work, and the knowledge that the eyes of his fellow-citizens were turned on him with expectation.

Besides the classical Gewandhaus there was then a second concert-union in Leipzig, under the name of Euterpe, with an orchestra composed of professional and amateur musicians, young and old; once a week they gave performances in the "old rifle-gallery" outside the Peter's Gate, before a less pretentious but most sympathetic public. The first-named concerts, Leipzig's musical pride, were at that time under the direction of kindly August Pohlenz*; the management of this humbler rival had recently been assumed by Wagner's former teacher, Musikdirektor Chr. Gottlieb Müller (a valued member of the theatre-band), who had raised it to the reputation of a kind of "popular Gewandhaus." In the case of Wagner's early works the Euterpe concerts repeatedly formed the stepping-stone to an audience in the higher forum: "I was in the good books of this minor orchestral union," he says himself at the end of 1881, "which had already performed a fairly fugal concert-overture of mine in the Altes Schützenhaus." This was the C major overture with the elaborate closing fugue; but even before its promotion to the Gewandhaus we hear of the young composer's making his first public appearance in the dramatic field with a "Scene and Aria." On the 22nd April the aged reciter Solbrig (see p. 100) gave a so-called "declamatorium" at the Court-theatre, with a fair amount of musical relief: the instrumental portion was furnished by Spontini's *Nurmahal* overture and an overture of Dorn's to *Julius Cæsar*; among the vocal pieces we find mention of this "Scene and Aria by Richard Wagner, capitally sung by Dem. Wüst"—the

* Christian August Pohlenz, born 1790 at Saalgast in the Niederlausitz, died 1843 at Leipzig.

Henriette Wüst already referred to, and of whom we shall have to speak again. Unfortunately it has proved impossible to discover any further particulars about this aria, which would seem to have disappeared entirely.

On the 30th April the C major Overture itself advanced to the Gewandhaus; not, however, at one of the regular twenty subscription-concerts, but at a "musical academy" given by the Italian singer Matilda Palazzesi, who, on the dissolution of the Italian Opera at Dresden, had just received the honorary title of a Royal Saxon Chamber-singer, and was making a concert tour through Leipzig, Hanover and other German towns, prior to returning to her native country. On the authority of a discoloured old programme which he found among the master's papers, we are told by W. Tappert that this overture figured as the first number of the concert's second part, with the designation "new." Five-and-twenty years later, namely Nov. 30, 1877, it was played in public once again by Bilse's band in the German capital, from the well-preserved score. Before that, however, it had been rescued from oblivion to celebrate the master's sixtieth birthday, May 22, 1873, at a surprise performance in the old Margraves' opera-house at Bayreuth. One of the audience on this latter occasion has recorded his opinion that the work most eloquently reveals the influence of Beethoven, and its clear, decided features and plastic themes already shadow forth the future master of the musical drama, whilst the fruit of Cantor Weinlig's teaching is evident in the powerful and effectively instrumented fugue at its close. But a more attentive hearer would perhaps have traced a greater likeness to Mozart, than to Beethoven, in consonance with Weinlig's tenets.

IX.

THE C MAJOR SYMPHOHY.

Composition of the Symphony in C: its construction and themes.—Journey to Vienna: "Zampa" and Strauss's waltzes.—Prague: Dionys Weber has the Symphony played by his Conservatoire pupils. — Mozart traditions. — Tomatschek; Friedrich Kittl. — "Die Hochzeit."—Return to Leipzig.—Heinrich Laube.—"Kosziusko" text.—Performance of the Symphony at the Gewandhaus.—Departure for Würzburg.

> *Of great poets we know that their youthful works at once proclaim the whole main theme of their productive life; we find it otherwise with the musician. Who would expect to recognise in their youthful works the true Mozart, the genuine Beethoven, with the same distinctness as he detects the total Goethe, and in his striking works of youth the veritable Schiller?*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

A YEAR rich in experiences, and marked by great personal diligence, had passed over the keen young artist, now nineteen years of age. The approach of summer tempted him to an excursion into the larger world outside, with his completed Symphony in his pocket. But before we can accompany him on his trip, we must return to that work's composition.

Since the beginning of 1832, with various interruptions, he had devoted his full energy to this his first long work, principally, as it would seem, in the month of March; though we have no definite data to go by, as the original manuscript is irretrievably lost, and fifty years later a new score had to be compiled from the recovered orchestral parts. Lucky that even that was possible. For this Symphony played no insignificant rôle in young Wagner's artistic development: with it his apprenticeship comes to end. As he says in his own account of the work, signed just six weeks before his death, "When the musician has dallied for a sufficient

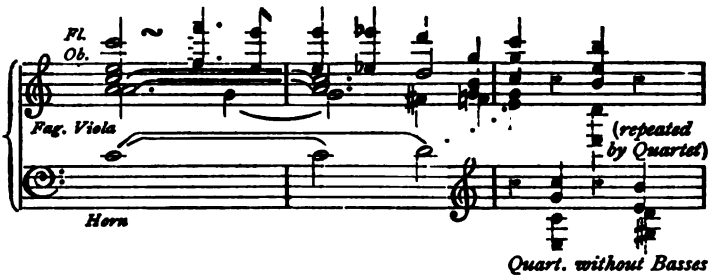
length of time with what he supposes to be the production of Melody, at last it frets and shames him to discover that he has merely been stammering out his favourite models: he longs for self-dependence; and this he can win through nothing but obtaining mastery of Form. So the precocious melodist becomes contrapuntist: now he has nothing more to do with melodies, but with Themes and their working out; it becomes his joy to sport with them, to revel in strettos, the overlapping of two or three themes, till he has exhausted every possibility conceivable" (*P. W.* VI., 319). How far he had progressed in this direction, without losing sight of the firm and drastic contour of his two great model symphonists, Mozart and Beethoven, the C major Symphony reveals at a glance.

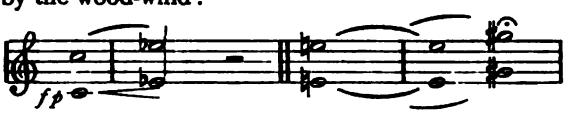
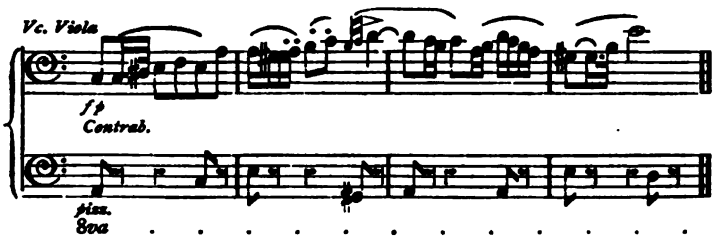
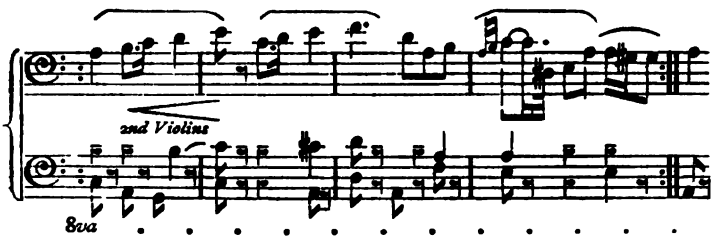
In addition to these more general qualities of his youthful work the master recognised but one distinctive feature of his personality, a feature that pervades the work: "If anything of Richard Wagner were to be detected in it, it would be the boundless confidence with which he stuck at nothing even then, and which saved him from that priggishness so irresistible to the German. This confidence reposed at that time on a great advantage I enjoyed over Beethoven: for when I took up something like the standpoint of his Second Symphony, I already knew the Eroica, the C minor and the A major, which were still unknown to the master at the time he wrote the Second, or at most could have been floating before him only in dimmest distance" (*ibid.* 319-20).

This work, though performed at many large centres in the season 1887-8 (and then withdrawn), has never been published; but the reader will find a comprehensive analysis of its construction, with examples of its principal themes etc., in an excellent little monograph by O. Eichberg.* The chief theme of the first movement is distinguished, according to Eichberg, not only by its truly Beethovenian cut, but by the extraordinary searchingness of its expression, and the master was certainly too severe upon himself when he wrote that such a theme "lends itself quite well to counterpoint, but has little to say"; for it is just this theme that lends the whole first movement its eminently symphonic character. The second principal theme (in G major) with an imitative section attached to it, is followed by a melodic passage which not only

* "*Richard Wagner's Symphonie in C dur*, analysirt von Oscar Eichberg"—28 pages, with 25 musical illustrations—Berlin, 1887, published by Hermann Wolf's Concert-direction.

points distinctly to Wagner's later manner, but is also interesting through its presenting the earliest example of that turn, or mordente, which appears so often and so characteristically in the master's dramatic works:



The first movement begins *sostenuto e maestoso*, but changes to an *Allegro con brio*; towards its powerful close a yearning question is put by the wood-wind:

This forms the thematic link connecting the first with the second movement, *Andante* $\frac{3}{4}$, which it opens, sounded by oboes and clarinets, and in which it plays a very prominent part. The principal motive of the Andante has an elegiac character, forcibly reminding us—not so much by its actual notes, as by its general build—of the Andante in Beethoven's C minor. Perhaps this relationship struck the aged master himself, for he refers in particular to that symphony of his great forerunner. However that may be, he was sufficiently fond of it, not merely to use it again for a New Year's office 1834-5 (as we shall presently learn), but to make it serve as peroration to the account already cited, where he rightly calls it "not a theme, but an actual melody":

The third movement, C major *Allegro assai* ¾, is at once the most rapid and the longest, mounting up to 587 bars if we include the usual repetitions. The final movement, in Rondo form, afforded a fine field for contrapuntal ingenuity; and the "dauntless energy that dashes on from one end of the work to the other," as remarked by an early reviewer, "conducts with lofty passion to a brilliant close."

His Symphony finished, its author was free to set out for Vienna in the summer of 1832, with no other object than a fleeting taste of this once-famed musical centre. In his *Pilgrimage to Beethoven*, written eight years later, he makes his German Musician say: "How delighted I was with the merry ways of the dwellers in this empire-city. I was in a state of exaltation, and saw everything through coloured glasses. The somewhat shallow sensuousness of the Viennese seemed the freshness of warm life to me; their volatile and none too discriminating love of pleasure I took for frank and native sensibility to all things beautiful." Indeed the proud consciousness of being the author of a completed grand Symphony might well "exalt" the actual artist to an almost equal degree with the hero of his tale, though *he* had come five years too late for a visit to Beethoven. But whereas the imaginary character had the joy of seeing on one of the five stage-posters for the day the announcement of a performance of *Fidelio*, and hearing the very finest personatrix of the title-rôle, Wilhelmine Schröder, there was no such luck for the real young man: "What I saw and heard," he tells us in the *Autobiographic Sketch*, "edified me little; wherever I went, it was *Zampa* and Straussian potpourris on *Zampa*—both, and especially at that time, an abomination to me."

Moreover—or should we say "because"?— it was the terrible year of Cholera, and a Viennese news-letter of that summer informs us that its ravages were still more awful than on the occasion of

its first appearance, killing its victims in a few hours, with hardly an exception rescued by the doctors. These horrors altered little in the outward aspect of the city. "It is inconceivable," continues that news-letter, "how flighty and heedless our populace can be in the midst of so perilous a situation: here and there one hears expression of anxiety; but nobody alters one tittle in his mode of life, and the places of public amusement are packed to overflowing." The *Zampa* mania is also referred to: "This opera has almost the same success with us as the *Stumme von Portici*; every performance is given to crowded houses, and the box-office is mobbed."

In quite another region our young German musician met something more to his liking, namely the waltzes of Strauss the older and Raymund's fairy-dramas. Thirty-one years later he refers to at least one of these features—though the Strauss he then alludes to would probably be the younger Johann:* "What Vienna of itself can do, with an imaginative, gay and genial public, is proved by two of the most original and delightful products in all the realm of public art,—the *Magic-dramas of Raymund* and the *Waltzes of Strauss*. If you don't wish for higher things, then be content with this: indeed its intrinsic value is nothing to make light of, for in respect of grace, refinement and genuine musical substance, one single Straussian waltz as much outtops the most of our imported foreign factory-wares as the Stephen's-tower those hollow pillars which line the Paris boulevards" (*P. W.* III., 386).

Taking all in all, his stay at Prague on his journey home was more resultful to him than the few days he passed in gay Vienna. Among the most fruitful acquaintances he made here, was that of the estimable director of the Prague Conservatorium, Dionys Weber. The young musician's earnest zeal went straight to the heart of this strict and highly conservative master, and won him the welcome encouragement of hearing several of his own compositions, including the Symphony, played by the orchestra of the conservatoire pupils. Contemporary accounts inform us that, although their solos made it manifest that one was dealing with talents in course of formation, these young people's rendering of ensemble-pieces, overtures and symphonies, offered a pleasure scarcely to be rivalled by an assemblage of the greatest virtuosi.

* On the other hand the Strauss mentioned in the *Parisian Fatalities* (1841), as one of the pleasures missed in Paris, is of course the father.—W. A. E.

Apropos of a visit he once paid to the establishment, Spontini is said to have remarked: "Over fifty young folk—at the happy age when one devotes oneself to art with that fresh enthusiasm whose bloom is partly rubbed away by advancing years, partly by other interests in life—with their teachers at the first desk of every instrument, are led by the expert staff of Director Dionys Weber, who knows so well to check the fire of youth when threatening to outleap due bounds, and thus attains an ensemble that kindles laity alike and connoisseurs to the highest delight." So our young friend, to whom it was of the utmost importance that his works should materialise from ink and paper into living sound, might well be pleased with the good fortune that had placed such means in his way. Perhaps the shortening of his symphony's Finale by forty bars, noticed by Tappert when going through the old orchestral parts, may be traced to this Prague rehearsal; even if the cut was not effected till a later date, there can be no doubt of its origin in the impressions made by this first hearing of the work on its composer, who at no time was careful for an idle show of cleverness, but always for firm and clear expression of his dominant idea.*

What he further learnt from the older musician was in part instructive, in part distressing to the ardent student of Beethoven; though the opinions of the Prague director were capped by those only too current in the easy-going musical world of Leipzig. As late as 1869, in his essay on *Conducting*, Wagner refers to Dionys Weber's having spoken of the *Eroica* as "an utter abortion," and hastens to add: "True enough: he knew no other than the Mozartian allegro, which I have characterised before; he let his pupils play the Allegro of the *Eroica* in the strict time of that; and whoever witnessed such a performance, must surely have agreed with Dionys. But no one played it otherwise" (*P. W.* IV., 325). The young man was already beginning to form his own standard of criticism, though it would naturally remain for the present undivulged. On the other hand, it was of superlative value to receive from his Bohemian mentor the true traditions of

* According to Tappert's reckoning, the final movement originally embraced 492 bars, which were reduced by the cut aforesaid to 452, and eventually by another (made when?) to 397. "To judge by this outward sign," says Eichberg, "the Finale would appear to have been the movement that pleased its author least, at any rate that struck him as containing superfluities."

tempo and rendering in the case of Mozart's works. Friedrich Dionys Weber belonged to those exclusive Mozartians, by no means rare among the older musicians of that day, with whom it was difficult to agree upon Beethoven because their own development had not kept step with his giant strides; all the richer was he in information about Mozart, a considerable number of whose works he had heard conducted in person. As eye and ear witness of the rehearsals and first performance of *Figaro*, he informed his eager young listener "how the master could never get the overture played fast enough to please him; and how, to maintain its unflagging swing, he constantly urged on the pace wherever consistent with the nature of the theme" (*P. W.* VIII., 208) so that "when he had forced his bandsmen at last to a pitch of angry desperation which enabled them to take his *presto*, to their own surprise, he encouraged them with the cry, 'Now that was splendid! This evening, though, a trifle faster!'" (*P. W.* IV., 317). Many another priceless hint and detail anent the rendering of Mozart's works did Wagner glean from the ample harvest of the old Prague Nestor's recollections, to be treasured up for application to problems arising in the future.*

Another local celebrity whose acquaintance Richard made in the Moldau city, was the composer Wenzel Tomaschek, a man whose opinion upon every musical occurrence within the bounds of his Bohemian fatherland was eagerly sought. "He had made no art-tours, nor taken any other steps to circulate his compositions," says Hanslick, "yet the older he grew, the firmer he sat—like a spider in its web—the centre of an admiring little circle; and it was held sheer madness for a stranger artist to take his leave of Prague without having introduced himself to Tomaschek." Though this last necessity was by no means so vital to Wagner, who was very far from angling for Prague successes, he did not throw away the chance of visiting a man with so much influence, and was again repaid by kind encouragement. To so devout a

* In the same letter to the Dresden *Anzeiger* of August 14, 1846, from which is taken the first of the two passages just quoted, he writes: "Not only my natural feeling, but also tradition derived from the source above-mentioned, determine me to read the tempo of the so-called Letter-duet between Susanna and the Countess as an actual allegretto, in accordance with its title . . . whereas most of our German lady-singers have accustomed themselves to delivering it more in the fashion of a sentimental love-duet."

disciple of Beethoven, Tomaschek had at least one interesting side: in earlier years he once had seen the great master face to face in his own lodgings, just about the time of the revival of *Fidelio* after its initial failure; and gladly would he dwell upon that meeting. Just as the youth had sounded Dionys Weber on the subject of Mozart, we perhaps may attribute certain lifelike touches in Wagner's subsequent description of the Bonn master's outward appearance (*Pilgr. to B.*) to the faithful remembrances of an eye-witness. Rash as it would be, to trace that clear-cut cameo of Beethoven's personality to any one particular source, we cannot help feeling that there is an inner relation between the scenes in this tale and the impressions of the summer trip of 1832; nor would it be inconceivable that the first germ of the story should already have taken shape in the mind of the lad of nineteen years, to gather round it certain drastic details learnt by word of mouth, and coloured with the memories of his recent visit to Vienna.

Turning to the lighter aspect of his stay, he could not possibly go short of company in a town where sister Rosalie had for some years been a favourite actress in the enjoyment of every species of artistic recognition and social regard. Earlier in the same summer, after a longish interval, she had played a number of guest-rôles at the National theatre. The simultaneous presence of tenor Wild from Vienna, who was earning *Zampa* triumphs here as well, led to a performance of the *Stumme* in which Rosalie took the title-rôle in her own impressive manner.* She had also appeared before the public of Prague as Lucia in *König Enzio*, as Mirandolina in Goldoni's *Locandiera*, and in many other characters. How little she had lost her old power of attraction, is proved by her farewell performance in *Kätchen von Heilbronn*. It fell upon the evening of the feast of Saint Margaret (July 13: "the first pear is plucked by Margaret"), a holiday kept by every class of Prague society with the result that even the greatest stars were greeted as a rule with a half-filled parterre: at this farewell of Rosalie's the house was full.

* Besides that of the Neapolitan fishermaid, she played another dumb-show part during this temporary engagement, namely in Th. Hell's then popular melodrama *Yelva* (adapted from the French, with music by Reissiger); contemporary reports declaring that she made of "every limb a tongue," and that almost each of her mute harangues raised a storm of applause (see news-letter in the *Abendzeitung*, also the Prague *Bohemia*, 1832).

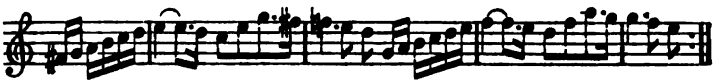
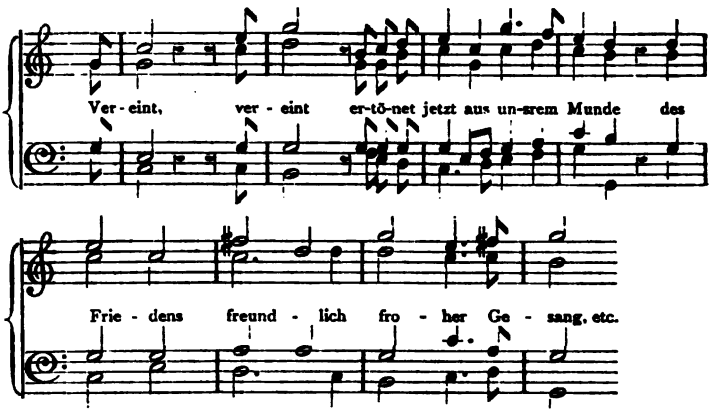
Among those with whom our hero struck up friendship in Prague was Johann Friedrich Kittl, at that time drafter of briefs in the fiscal bureau of his native city, but also studying simple and double counterpoint with Tomaschek, and fairly on his way to abandoning law and civil practice for a musical career: only his father's wish held him back for awhile. As composer and conductor Kittl had decided talent; for the rest, he was owner of a goodly double-chin, notwithstanding his youth, and the *enfant gâté* of the aristocracy, particularly its fairer portion. He was passionately addicted to the chase,—witness his imaginative Hunting Symphony, which Mendelssohn considered good enough in later years to conduct it at the Gewandhaus, also to accept its dedication—and it was probably in Kittl's company and the summer forests of Bohemia that young Wagner allowed himself to be drawn into the only hunting expedition of all his life, the echoes from which we may hear in *Die Feen*, ay, in *Parsifal* itself. Wolzogen tells us in his *Richard Wagner und die Thierwelt*: "Ever full of life and energy, the lad had let his boon companions bear him with them to the chase. A hare was started: at random his unpractised hand fired off his fowling-piece; he knew not whether he had hit or not; every thought was drowned in the excitement of an unaccustomed 'sport.' Later, when he and his noisy comrades were merrily lunching in the open, a wounded leveret dragged itself their way: the eloquence of its appealing eye told the young man's conscience that *this* was the victim of his thoughtless pleasure. Never could he forget that look of anguish in his fellow-creature,—never again take up a gun against an animal."

His friendship with Kittl outlasted this brief holiday in the smiling valleys of the Moldau, but it was not until ten years later that he saw "dear fat friend Hans" again, newly elected Director of the Prague Conservatorium and successor to the worthy old pedantic Dionys. They reminded each other of "the happy days of never-failing fun and laughter when they both were gay young sparks unknown to fame," and their excellent relations were heartily renewed whenever Wagner came that way.

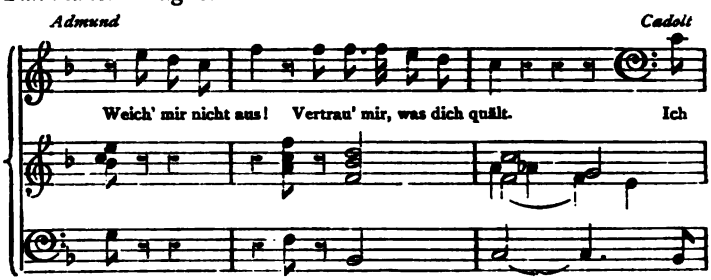
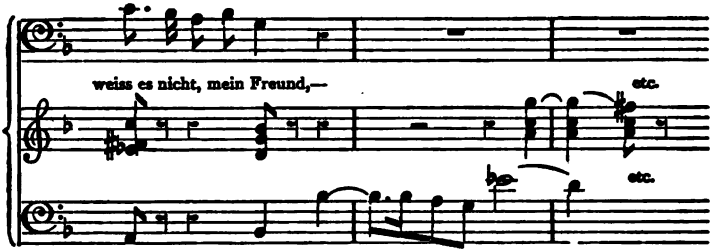
But the stay in Prague had gained another meaning for the lad. He had not been altogether idle, for it was here that he sketched and versified an operatic text of tragic aim, *Die Hochzeit*.

Wherever he had lit upon its medieval subject, so sombre in such blithesome times, he could not afterwards remember: a frantic lover climbs to the window of the sleeping-chamber of his friend's bride while she is waiting for the bridegroom; the bride struggles with the madman and hurls him into the court-yard below, where he gives up the ghost; at the funeral the bride sinks lifeless on his corpse. This his earliest text is remarkable for the names of its dramatis personæ, partly old German, partly old Norse or Ossianic: Morald (?), Hadmar, Harald, Admund, Cadolt; Arindal is already met here, and among the women Ada and Cora (? Lora). All these names are distinguished by the fulness of their vowel sounds and the preponderance of soft or liquid consonants (d, l, m, n, r); the most conspicuous in this respect are "Arindal" and "Ada," to be encountered again in *Die Feen*. With this libretto Wagner left the field of instrumental music for his own artistic sphere. What has been preserved of it, shews that same contempt for "well-turned verse and charming rhymes" which continues to the time of *Rienzi*; neither is the later enricher of the German language to be detected here, as indeed the stuff presented no necessity for daring innovations. However, in the loose-built opening verses we find an involuntary union of end-rhyme and alliteration:

Vereint ertönet jetzt aus unsrem Munde
des Friedens freundlich froher Gesang!
Denn Hadmar und Morald, nach langem Kampf,
nach blut'gem Streit,
sind ausgesöhnt, vereint zu dieser Stunde,
da wir, ein frohes Fest zu begeh'n,
die Hände freudig uns reichen &c.

Inwardly advanced in many things, he returned home toward the end of November, and at once proceeded to the musical setting of his book. "Leipzig, the 5th of December 1832," is the date at the foot of the sketch for the first scene, closely written on eight folio pages, with many a correction. This scene consists of an introduction, followed by a chorus and septet. The *Maestoso* introduction is most energetic in its rhythm, according to W. Tappert (*Musikalisches Wochenblatt* 1887, No. 27), but very un-Wagnerian here and there in its melody, as proved by the subjoined example:

The male chorus, following directly on the Introduction, celebrates with vigour and swing the peace concluded between two ancient enemies, the houses of Hadmar and Morald:

A three-part female chorus takes up the strain:

Willkommen ihr, von Morald's fernem Lande,
auf Hadmar's froher Burg!

At the first pause in the general jubilation there ensues a duologue between Cadolt (bass), the son of Morald, and Admund (tenor) of the house of Hadmar. In the gloomy Cadolt we recognise that "frantic lover," without being able to say for certain if his passion has already seized him, or merely thrown its first shadow across his path. The orchestra would appear to have taken an active part in the expression of this section, the second and fifth bars of which are characteristic of the *Rienzi* and *Tannhäuser* Wagner:



The recitative leads on to an *Allegro maestoso.* With trumpets and drums the orchestra announces a chorus of Welcome, written mainly in four parts, but extended to six when the men and maids address the "happy pair" in three-part alternation:

Seht, o seht, dort nahet schon,
in Jugendfülle und hehrer Pracht,
neuvermählt das junge Paar,
in Lieb' und ewiger Treu' vereint!

Men.

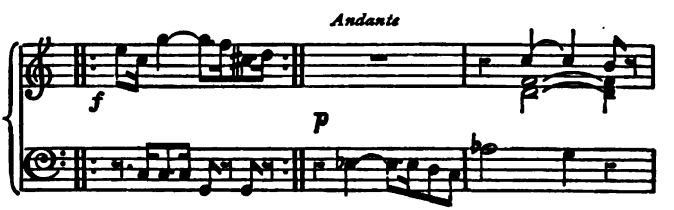
Preis Dir, der Schönsten aller Schönen!

Women.

Preis Dir, dem Edelsten der Edlen! etc.

But, immediately before the entry of the bright C major Allegro of the chorus, that threatening bass-figure attached to Cadolt's rejoinder to his friend is heard once more:

Moreover it suddenly cuts short the pompous tag of the full orchestra, foretelling that grief shall follow joy, and we may accordingly claim it as an earliest "Leitmotiv."



It now conducts to a recitative, "Sie sind vermählt." From the castle chapel comes the bridal couple, Arindal and Ada, with

a numerous retinue; Cadolt's lurid gaze is magnetically attracted to the bride of his former enemy, and so compels her own that she shudders at sight of this stranger:

Ada (catching sight of Cadolt).
Mein Gatte, sprich! wer ist der fremde Mann?

Arindal.
Cadolt ist's, Morald's Sohn, vor Kurzem noch
mein Feind, doch jetzt für immerdar mein Freund!

The lines of the future plot are thus concisely mapped, whilst the sentiments animating the various personages combine at the end of the scene to form a well-conceived Septet (Ada, Lora, Arindal, Harald, Admund, Cadolt, Hadmar), which much delighted Weinlig. Rosalie was by no means so pleased with the *book*, when her brother shewed it to her. Reason enough for him to destroy the whole of his poem, and break off his composition. The musical sketch and completed score of its first scene, however, remained for a while in his hands.

Through that inexplicable fate which has befallen so many of Wagner's manuscripts, this sketch, together with a number of other papers from Wagner's first period (mostly drafts of letters and essays down to 1842 and beyond), was offered for public auction a few years after the master's death. By the nature of the thing, they cannot but have issued from the personal effects his first wife left behind her, and one would have thought it the first duty of her executors to hand them over to their author, or at least to the survivors of his family. But even in his lifetime the master had a strange experience of the legal status of intellectual property, in connection with this selfsame fragment of *Die Hochzeit*. As he was no longer in possession either of the sketch or the scene's completed score, after wellnigh half a century (1879) he was interested to hear of the latter's existence in good preservation, as a manuscript of 36 folio pages announced for public sale without notice or exhibition to himself. Wishing to renew acquaintance with the long-forgotten relic, also to ensure its restoration to his family, he declared his readiness to buy his own handiwork, and inquired its price. The man in possession, a Würzburg music-dealer, asked him the sum of five-thousand marks (£250)! Little inclined either to make himself a victim of shameless extortion or to compete with hardened autograph-

collectors in the pursuit of their expensive hobby, yet averse to abandoning his wish without an effort, after protracted negotiations he commenced a lawsuit against this grasping Fafner. The latter, according to existing laws, could not possibly raise any claim to the *contents* of the manuscript, which would have involved the right of publication; for the mere paper and ink the price demanded was too preposterous, and had a suspicious air of blackmailing.* But German Justice in two earthly courts decided otherwise. The result of the action was a dismissal of his claim, with costs amounting to 600 marks to be paid by the plaintiff,—a pretty penalty for his brazen attempt to renew relations with a juvenile work!

It was upon his return from Prague that Wagner made his first acquaintance with Heinrich Laube, who was six years older and basking in the sunshine of a newly-gotten fame. Born at Schrottau in Silesia, even at the gymnasium he had "shaken the security" of the weekly papers of that province with his poems. During his two years of student-life at Halle he had belonged with distinction to the interdicted Burschenschaft,† and thereafter entered at Breslau into literary relations which brought the youthful "theologian" into contact with the theatre. The vortex of the July Revolution had drawn him into politics, and just as Wagner became "a revolutionary at one blow," had Laube become with all his heart a "red-hot partisan of liberalism"—which seemed to him "applied Theology and the modern Sermon on the Mount." At the beginning of 1832, while Wagner was composing overtures and enthusing for the Poles, Laube had published his novel *Das neue Jahrhundert* ("The new Century"). His heaven-storming thoughts of freedom, expressed with all a student's pertness and hurling the approved catch-phrases at ancient use and custom,

* On this side Wagner had already had an experience in 1871, at Strassburg, which he had no desire to repeat. A local dealer offered him a packet of his own letters for 100 thalers (£15); the contents were not disclosed, merely: so many letters, including one from *Frau* Richard Wagner. Supposing that they might treat of private affairs, and anxious to prevent impertinent gossip, not to say publication, he consented to pay the purchase price,—and found in the mysterious bundle a few unimportant business notes, whose recovery would not be of the smallest moment to him. But the transaction had been completed, and he could not go back on it.

† See *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, Vol. IV., p. 47.—W. A. E.

above all at our "effete" *marriage*, found ready ear among the younger generation. The money reaped by his work's success he intended to spend on a trip to Paris, to study Saint-Simonism; but he got no farther than its first stage, Leipzig. While writing in a dismal garret of the Nikolaigasse those letters which the Hippolytes and Constantines of his "Young Europe" send to one another, he received from bookseller Leopold Voss, proprietor of the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, the offer of the editorship of that widely-circulated journal, to commence with the new year.

At a ball in the Hôtel de Pologne, soon after his arrival at Leipzig, he asked his sprightly partner whether she shared his view that our present marriage-laws must be altered. "Luckily," he adds, "my audacious question had been put to an awakened damsel. She replied: 'At once, do you think?' and laughed. It was the sister of Richard Wagner." Presumably Ottilie is meant, for Laube already knew and admired Rosalie as a poetic artist at the theatre. Before long he met Richard too: "I became a visitor at the house of his family," he continues, "and the anxious mother would always ask me, 'Do you really think anything will come of Richard?' She was an intelligent little woman, not without humorous turns in conversation. In her second marriage, with a painter, she had imbibed some knowledge of artistic matters, and two of her daughters were actresses. For that very reason she had great fears of a purely musical career for Richard: he himself was so flighty, she said, and when it came to the question of making money by his music, so fantastical; he had had the advantage of a thorough musical education, as was to be expected at Leipzig since the time of Bach, and was bursting with self-confidence." Subject to a few inessential curtailments, such is Laube's story; in the main it appears correct, though we cannot endorse its sequel, namely that Wagner had *asked* him for an operatic text. In fact we read the very opposite in the *Communication to my Friends*, to wit that Wagner had declined a *proffered* opera-text on the subject of "Kosziusko" (*P. W.* I., 292).

Now, there is a delicate way of rejecting an offer, that may be interpreted, if one pleases, as half an acceptance; but it is harder, without embroidery, to convert it into a request. Even at the beginning of his artistic life, Wagner had a rooted dislike of

setting texts he had not himself created word by word and scene by scene; and he would have credited his new-found friend with anything in the world sooner than a knowledge of what was only gradually dawning on his own mind, namely the proper choice and treatment of an operatic subject. In any case the would-be librettist soon learnt what the time of day was, and cut his labours short: "I began my 'Kosziusko,'" says Laube, "but got stuck in the first act, at the Diet of Cracow; and Richard himself seemed to take no special interest in it,"—an indifference which appears to have caused no breach, at present, in their mutual good relations. But the fact of Laube's choosing a Kosziusko subject, and hoping that it would impress his friend, was surely no accident: enthusiasm for the Poles plays an important rôle not only in Wagner's student-days, but also with the heroes of *Das junge Europa*. These two young men, indeed, had many points in common: both were of hot young blood, both full of energy and enterprise; both born improvers of the world, shrinking from no consequences; to both the world, alike political and æsthetic was a yet untrodden field, and Wagner's leaning toward the company of "political writers" found in this new acquaintanceship a welcome encouragement and satisfaction.

The head-quarters of "elegant" and "modern" letters in the Leipzig of those days, particularly at fair-time, was Kintschy's restaurant. Here flocked the cultured and polemical "Young European" world, to sip its coffee, grog or chocolate, to taste its ice or pastry, and, between one mouthful and the next, devour the papers. Hither, besides Laube, came the unfortunate author of the "Polish Lays," Ernst Ortlepp, who had recently arrived at Leipzig to pursue his literary studies;* Gustav Schlesier, Wagner's comrade from the Dresden Kreuzschule, who had passed with him into the Nikolai, and whom we have already met as his coadjutor in the discussion of "Schelling's transcendental idealism"; with many another. It was probably of these Leipzig reunions in his unclouded youth that Wagner was thinking, amid the chill

* Ortlepp makes a merely episodic appearance in Wagner's life, but possessed at least one great attraction for him—his boundless reverence of Beethoven, as proved by his panegyric, *Beethoven, eine phantastische Charakteristik* (Leipzig, Hartknoch). Born 1800 at a hamlet near Naumburg, he removed to Leipzig about the time of Laube's first sojourn there, but was compelled to leave the place soon after Laube's banishment, on account of his political poems. With G. Schlesier he went to Stuttgart, where Lewald,

of Parisian hardships, when he wrote: "To be a German at home is splendid, where one has soul, Jean Paul, and Bavarian beer; where one can quarrel over the philosophy of Hegel, or the waltzes of Strauss" etc. (*P. W.* VIII., 87). Indeed it was a time of insouciance never to return, when the young man felt himself helped forward by his entourage, and his own artistic individuality had not yet roused the opposition of that entourage both near and far.

Soon after his return to Leipzig he had handed in the score of his Symphony to the directorate of the Gewandhaus concerts, with a view to its speedy performance. The result we cannot do better than relate in his own words, from that account (*Bericht über die Wiederaufführung eines Jugendwerkes*) already cited:—

"In Leipzig's pre-Judaic age, beyond the memory of more than a handful of my fellow-townsmen, the so-called Gewandhaus Concerts were accessible even to beginners of my 'line.' The ultimate decision as to the admittance of new compositions lay in the hands of the Principal, a worthy old gentleman, Hofrath Rochlitz by name, who took things seriously and with a method. My Symphony had been laid before him, and I had to follow it up by a visit. When I introduced myself in person, the stately gentleman thrust up his spectacles and cried: 'What's this? You are a very young man: I had expected someone much older, a more experienced composer.'—That promised well: the Symphony was accepted; though with the request that it first be played by the 'Euterpe,' if possible, as a sort of trial-trip. Nothing easier to accomplish: I was in the good books of this minor orchestral union, which had already performed a fairly fugal Concert-overture of mine in the Altes Schützenhaus outside the Peter's-gate. At this time, about Christmas 1832, we had moved to the Schneiderherberge ("Tailors' house of call") by the Thomas-gate — a detail which I make a present to our

publisher of the *Europa*, formed the centre of a brilliant literary circle; but he tumbled ere long into such a state of penury, that he was obliged to return to his home. A combination of bodily and mental suffering at last undermined his moral fibre; he took to drink, and fell into deeper and deeper misery. On the 14th of June, 1864, he was found dead in a mill-race on the lesser Saale, near the village of Almrich. His numerous literary works, chiefly from the years 1828 to 1856 (with a Collected Edition in 3 vols., 1845) are pretty fully catalogued in Brümmer's *Deutsches Dichterlexikon*.

witlings, for improvement. I remember that we were very much incommoded by the bad lighting there; after a rehearsal in which a whole concert-programme was attacked, however, we saw quite well enough to struggle through my Symphony: * not that it gave myself much pleasure, for to me it seemed to scout all thought of sounding well. But what is faith for? Heinrich Laube, who at that time was making a name by his writings at Leipzig, not troubling his head how things sounded, had taken me under his wing; he praised my Symphony in the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* with great warmth, and eight days afterwards my good mother saw my work transplanted from the Tailors' Inn to the Drapers' Hall, where it suffered its performance under conditions somewhat similar to the first. People were good to me in Leipzig then: a little admiration, and good-will enough, reconciled me to the future" (*P. W.* VI., 316-17).

To this vivid scrap of autobiography we may add a few external details.

The Gewandhaus concert, which Richard's symphony opened, formed one of the regular subscription-series under August Pohlenz, and took place on January the 10th, 1833. We append the programme, on which figure two very young artists, the one a débutante aged fifteen years, Livia Gerhard,† the other still

* A Leipzig correspondent writes to the *Allg. Mus. Ztg.* of Feb. 13, 1833—exactly half a century before the master's death—"Our *Euterpe*, an orchestral society consisting of amateurs and junior members of the standing orchestra, has been extraordinarily active this year, giving us many compositions old and new, for the most part executed very well. Besides several symphonies by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, we have heard a new and well-constructed symphony by a member of the society already known to the public, Herr F. L. Schubert, also one by Richard Wagner," and so on. (This Schubert must not be confounded with the great Franz Peter Schubert, deceased in 1828.)

† Dr E. Kneschke in his History of the Gewandhaus Concerts (p. 58) speaks of her as "that talented and charming singer Livia Gerhard. Born 1818 at Gera, she received her vocal instruction from Pohlenz, and set foot on the Leipzig stage at the early age of fifteen with brilliant success. What *Rosalie Wagner*, sister of Richard Wagner, was to the Leipzig theatre as actress, namely a truly poetic and soulful artist, Frl. *Gerhard* was as singer, her by-play uniting with the bell-like timbre of her soprano voice to produce the profoundest and most agreeable effect. In 1835 she went to the Königstädter theatre in Berlin, but took leave of the stage the year following" (contemporaneously with Rosalie), "to give her hand to Dr. jur. Woldemar Frege of Leipzig."

younger, Clara Wieck aged thirteen, subsequently wife of Robert Schumann :—

(1) Symphony by Richard Wagner (new).
(2) Scene and Aria from *Sargino* by Paer, sung by Dem. Gerhard.
(3) Pianoforte Concerto by Pixis, played by Dem. Klara Wieck.
(4) Overture to *König Stephan* by Beethoven.
(5) Trio from *La Vilanella rapita* by Mozart, sung by Dem. Grabau, Herr Otto and Herr Bode.
(6) Finale from *I Capuleti e Montechi* by Bellini.

Again, though Wagner's reference would seem to assign to Laube's public praise of the work a hand in its acceptance by the directorate, we are obliged to rob H. Laube of that honour, as his eulogy did not in fact appear till fully three months after. It is to be found in a review of the subscription-concerts in No. 82 of the *Ztg. f. d. eleg. Welt*, April 27, 1833, and reads as follows: "In course of the winter I heard at these concerts a *Symphony* in the style of Beethoven by a young composer, *Richard Wagner*, which much prepossessed me in favour of this new musician. There is a brisk and buoyant energy in the ideas that join hands in this symphony, a bold impetuous stride from one end to the other, and yet such a virginal naïvety in the conception of the fundamental motives, that I build great hopes on the musical talents of its author."

There are at least two public criticisms that claim priority in point of time: the one by Ernst Ortlepp in Herlossohn's *Komet*, the other in the *Allg. Mus. Ztg.*, presumably by its editor G. W. Fink. As the earliest substantial reviews of any composition by Wagner, they both distinctly have historic interest, and we therefore give them at length, taking the later-published first on account of its closing sentence.

Ortlepp's critique, in the *Komet* of March 1, 1833, runs thus: "The concert began with a new *Symphony* by a very young gentleman, *Richard Wagner*. A first attempt can scarcely ever be a masterpiece, especially when almost purely imitative; nevertheless it may reveal a very significant talent. This is the case with Wagner's Symphony. He has taken Beethoven, in fact one particular symphony of Beethoven's, the A major, as his pattern, and planned the architecture of his work thereby. Far from blaming the beginner, we congratulate him on having chosen so high a model; and that the more, the happier has he been in

approaching it in many respects. . . . What to us appeared peculiarly successful, was the Andante, though it follows almost the exact lines of the A major; but we cannot approve of the trumpet-fugue in the last movement. When Wagner shall have planted himself on his own feet, and his heart instead of his brain has command of the mechanism of tone, we are convinced he will do great things. His Symphony was loudly applauded. As we hear, he will soon come out with an opera." This "opera" was plainly Laube's *Kossiusko*, the fate of which was not yet settled in the eyes of Ortlepp, who of course had heard of it from Laube. And we may take it as tolerably certain that, if Wagner at any time had allowed himself to be guided solely by considerations of outward advantage, he would not have declined co-operation with a friend whose literary and journalistic connections were bound to ensure a conspicuous success. But he had other aims —with fatal consequences; for the work that he was brooding in his heart, and presently created, never attained to performance in his lifetime. Easy as it had been for him to win the favour of the public in the concert-room, despite his links with the theatre it remained impossible for many a year to get *any* of his dramatic works represented in Leipzig; a matter offering no insuperable difficulties to countless products of contemporary authors. How different might his lot have been, had he been enabled to pursue his evolution step by step before the eyes and ears of his native city! Yet, perhaps it was better so.

The other report, that in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, appeared on February 13, 1833, and runs as follows: "The new *Symphony* of our still youthful *Richard Wagner* (he scarcely numbers 20 years) was received, with the exception of its second movement [!], with loud applause, as indeed it merited. We hardly know what more could be demanded of a first attempt in a class of tone-poetry that already has mounted so high, unless we wished to set all reasonableness aside. The work deserves the credit of great diligence, and its inventive contents are nothing less than insignificant; the combinations bear witness to originality of conception, and the whole intention shews so right an endeavour, that we look with joyful hope to this young man. Even though the effort to remain true to himself is as visible as his use of orchestral effects is inexperienced; even though the working-out of one and the other idea is still too

long and laboured: yet these are points that come right of themselves with continued application. What Herr Wagner has, can come to no one who has it not within his breast already. The young artist left a few weeks since for Würzburg, where his brother is employed as a teacher of singing."

The journey to Würzburg, referred to in the last sentence, originally had no other object than not to let the grass grow under his feet. Its first motive was a visit to brother Albert, whom he had not seen for several years; its second an invitation, probably suggested by Albert, to conduct one of his overtures at a performance of the local Music-union. Wagner accepts it in a letter of January 12, 1833, written two days after the public production of his Symphony. A few days later he is on his road to Würzburg, with no definite idea as to how long he shall stay there.

SECOND BOOK.

STRAYINGS AND WANDERINGS.

(1833-1843.)

Durch Sturm und bösen Wind verschlagen,
irr' auf den Wassern ich umher,—
wie lange? weiss ich kaum zu sagen:
schon zähl' ich nicht die Jahre mehr.
Unmöglich dünkt mich's, dass ich nenne
die Länder alle, die ich fand:—
das einz'ge nur, nach dem ich brenne,—
ich find' es nicht, mein Heimathland!

(DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER, act i. sc. 3.)

I.

WURZBURG: "DIE FEEN."

Albert Wagner.—Richard as Chorus-master.—Birth of "Die Feen"; text and music.—"You have only to dare!"—The "Vampyr" aria.—Performances at the Wurzburg Musical Union.—Completion of "Die Feen."—Return to Leipzig.

> *What took my fancy in Gozzi's fairy-tale, was not merely its adaptability for an operatic text, but the charm of the subject itself.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

WAGNER reached Wurzburg in the second half of January 1833, after a journey through the winter snow. Here brother Albert had been occupied for some years as singer, actor and stage-manager. During his previous engagement (Augsburg 1827-29) he had married an actress Elise Gollmann of Mannheim,* younger sister of the not un-noted Julie Gley; the elder of his two little daughters, Johanna and Francisca, was already rehearsing in the nursery the preliminaries of her future famed career.

Albert's experience as singer was of the utmost moment to his younger brother. He possessed a very high and brilliant tenor voice, and his delivery was full of fire and feeling. A trouble of the throat, rendering him suddenly hoarse at times, caused him to devote more than ordinary attention to his acting, and his varied accomplishments made him a great favourite with the Wurzburg public. In parts such as Jean de Paris, George Brown, Count Armand in the *Water-carrier*, and the like, he earned ample recognition, and the strength and passion with which he imbued even Rossini's Othello always roused the audience to the highest pitch. As Roger in Auber's *Maçon*—under its German title of *Maurer und Schlosser*—he put such refinement into his

* August 12, 1828, at the Augsburg parish-church "of the Barefoot Friars."

rendering of the B flat aria in the third act, without interpolation of the hackneyed "fermata" effect, that it probably was *his* delivery of this "almost entrancingly spirited aria" of which the master was thinking when he deplored the impossibility of getting anything remotely like it from the tenors of our day (*P. W.* V., 271). His Florestan, also, made such a lasting impression on his younger brother, that in after years the master declared he "had never heard so good a Florestan."

With his longing to put his musical abilities to some practical test, it was not difficult to persuade Richard to fill the vacant post of chorus-conductor at the Opera. A year later he writes of this engagement, "To oblige the management I undertook to rehearse the choruses at the Wurzburg theatre, and thereby often gained an influence over the general get-up of an opera." His first theatrical appointment brought him in the princely "honorarium" of ten guldens a month (about £1), which pocket-money, paid him only for the actual duration of the season (three months), barely covered the rent of his modest apartment. He had taken lodgings in a little two-storeyed house (still standing) at the corner of the Kapuzinergasse, opposite the Hofgarten; his windows did not look over that pleasaunce, however, but across a court into a narrow alley leading in the direction of the Kleine Kapuzinergasse, where dwelt his brother. His landlady, a spinster on the sunny side of forty, in 1878 repaid his indifference to her charms by writing reminiscences (at the age of eighty) brimful of admiration for Albert's Masaniello, but very vague about her sometime lodger. If only the chorus-master had appeared in person on the stage!

Our young musician found his new command no sinecure. *Zampa*, Paer's *Camilla*, the *Water-carrier*, *Freischütz* and *Fidelio*, followed each other in swift succession during the month of February; March brought the *Stumme von Portici*, Rossini's *Tancred*, *Fra Diavolo* and *Oberon*; after Easter the Wurzburgers were offered the sensation of a first performance of Meyerbeer's *Robert the devil*, with Albert in the title-rôle (April 21, 25 and 30).* Richard's earliest active taste of life behind the scenes was not without its fascination; he was delighted with its merry

* Production of *Robert* in Paris Nov. 22, 1831; first performance in Germany, conducted by the composer himself at the Berlin Opera-house, June 30, 1832 (from 6 to 11.15 P.M.); between the two came London alone, but imperfectly, Feb. 1832.

tone, and the chorus soon became devoted to him. And then the local Music-union, with its regular choral and orchestral performances, would offer many an opening for his co-operation. It will be remembered that this society's invitation to conduct one of his overtures had been a determinant cause of his trip to Wurzburg; on which, or how many, of his instrumental works the choice now fell, we cannot ascertain. In his Paris article on *German Music* (1840) he refers to the surprising wealth of musical resources possessed by middling German cities in those days: instead of *one* well-organised band, you had two or three; and a footnote, added in 1871, says that in Wurzburg, "besides a full orchestra at the theatre, the bands of a musical society and a seminary gave alternate performances." One souvenir of his friendly relations with this Union has been preserved: it is that selfsame manuscript whose attempted recovery cost its author so dear in after years (see p. 147); a neat copy in Wagner's hand of the completed first number of his *Hochzeit*, dated March 1, 1833, with the dedication on its title-page "Dem Würzburger Musikverein zum Andenken verehrt." The precise reason for its dedication to the Wurzburg Music-union is not apparent: Tappert opines that the composer may once have got its chorus sung there; only, it would be strange that Wagner should nowhere have breathed a word of what would thus have been the solitary performance of his earliest dramatic work.

The first quarter of a year at Wurzburg slipped swiftly by in the numerous distractions of a new career. The last performance of *Robert*, April 30th, was also the close of the theatrical season; from the beginning of May the vacation lasted until towards the end of September. The company dispersed in every direction; even brother Albert left town with his wife, for a two-months star-engagement at Strassburg, where he played eighteen times with uniform success from the 7th of May to the 30th of June, exclusively in operas by Auber and Rossini save for winding up with *Robert*.

Thus Richard was left to his own devices in the ancient city, so picturesque with its Episcopal palace, Cathedral and University on the one side of the Main, linked by a statue-guarded bridge to an imposing fortress on the other; the whole enclosed by vine-clad hills, the birthplace of its famous potent Leistenwein and Steinwein. Nearly forty years afterwards he revisited the town

(1871), and so deep had been the impression made on him in youth, that he recognised each square and street at once, crying "That's the Pfaffengass', and that the Eichhorngass'," and so on. In reply to his companions' astonishment that he should have retained such details in his mind, he laughed and said, "I've not retained at all; but it's all coming back to me." True, he has made a little slip in *Religion and Art*, where he speaks of the stone relief over the northern porch of the Marienkapelle as belonging to a "church of St Kilian" (*P. W.* VI., 219); but that was written nearly another decad later, when the memory of the second visit would have somewhat blurred the sharpness of the first. As a matter of fact, there is *no* church of St Kilian, though tradition has it that this patron saint of vine-dressers suffered martyrdom on the spot where stands the twelfth-century Neumünster church with its tomb of Walther von der Vogelweide.

If solitary, Richard was by no means idle in this summer of 1833. With that fair copy of the fragment of *Die Hochzeit* he had bidden farewell to his abortive work; but a greater had been maturing in his bosom, and the spell of quietude and sunny days was seized to give it birth. The first conception of *Die Feen* appears to date from the end of his last residence in Leipzig, and it would seem that he had brought at least the complete scenario of his new work with him, if not the commencement of its poem. We now can understand why Laube's *Kosziusko* project had had so little charm for him.

Whoever remembers E. T. A. Hoffmann's repeated recommendation of Gozzi as a perfect mine for librettists, will not be surprised that Hoffmann's fervent devotee should have struck this very course. In the works of the imaginative Italian he found the dramatic fairy-tale *La Donna Serpente*, and turned it into an operatic poem such as he required.* The same subject had already been exploited in 1806 by a Berlin Kapellmeister Himmel for his opera, *Die Sylphen*; but Wagner certainly knew nothing of this long-expired predecessor, and his choice was determined solely

* The German student will find a comparison of Wagner's poem with the Gozzian original much facilitated by Herr Volkmar Müller's excellent translation of some of Gozzi's *Fiabe teatrali*, under the titles of *Das grüne Vögelchen*, *Die Frau als Schlange*, *Der König der Geister* and *Das blaue Ungeheuer*, Dresden 1887-89.

by the opportunity he saw in Gozzi's tale for a "romantic" opera in the then-prevailing style of Weber and Marschner. Very characteristic of his profoundly artistic instinct, even in these early days, are his deviations from the original. The subject of *Die Feen* is closely allied to those Undine and Melusina legends of the Middle Ages, which also tell us of a mortal's love towards a supernatural being; the ethical lesson, that true love is based on unconditional faith and unwavering confidence, we meet again in *Lohengrin*: but the ancient myth at bottom had been distorted by the bizarre fancy of the Italian people ere Gozzi laid his hand on it. Unconsciously, and led by nothing but his own artistic need, Wagner returned in his dénouement to the prototype of all these legends, the old Indian myth of the love of Puru-ravas for the heavenly nymph Urvaṣī, whom he loses through breaking a pledge, and regains through penances, yet so that *not she becomes his mortal wife, but he himself one of the divine Gandharvas.** In various other points, despite his medieval Northern scene of action, indicated by the choice of proper names etc., we find our dramatist unwittingly adopting features of the Indian myth; but his restoration of the lost beloved through the power of Song is a return from fabular caprice to the eternal myth of Orpheus, dictated by sound insight into the musical needs of his plot. Wagner's story is as follows:—

Arindal, son of the King of Tramond, chases a roe of wondrous beauty. It disappears in a river, whence resounds a voice so ravishing that he dives into the stream.† His faithful henchman Gernot leaps after him, and finds his master in a glittering magic-castle, at the feet of a fairy whose love he is wooing.

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* The oldest form of the story may be found in Max Müller's *Oxford Essays*; also in A. Kuhn's *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertrankes*, 1859, pp. 79-84, and in J. Dowson's *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*.

† This transference to another world through a leap into a stream or lake is of frequent occurrence in old Indian legends, e.g. in the Kātha-sarit-sāgara. Śridatta sees a damsel sinking in an eddy of the Ganges, and springs to her aid; scarcely has he dived under, than he finds himself in a magnificent temple of Śiva; in like manner, plunging into a lake, he regains the upper world. In another tale Śaktidēva returns by a similar route to the long-lost "golden city" of his home: a sumptuously-caparisoned horse excites his envy, he pursues it, and it casts him into a lake; in an instant he finds himself in the garden of his father. Wagner's "fairies" exactly correspond with the Gandharvas and Apsarases of Indian mythology.

Bent down to him, she breathed these words: "I love thee, as myself thou lovest; yet ere I wholly am thine own, an ordeal must thou overcome. And first, till eight long years have flown thou ne'er must ask me who I am."

Ada is a fairy's daughter by a mortal; to belong entirely to Arindal, she would fain put off her immortality; by edict of the Fairy King, she may not do this till her lover has withstood all proofs. Arindal is protected by Groma, a mighty magician, the guardian genius of the house of Tramond; whilst the fairies, on the other side, put forth all their power to keep their princess in their country. The hero, with his human aspirations, is thus twixt two opposing hosts of superhuman might. Eight years less two small days has he observed his vow, and enjoyed the utmost happiness beside his fairy wife, who has presented him with two sweet children. On the day before the last, he is betrayed to the forbidden question; Ada and the fairy-garden vanish, and he finds himself transported of a sudden to a desert place. During the prince's absence a sad fate has befallen the realm and house of the kings of Tramond: the aged King has died of grief for his long-lost son; the enemy has laid waste the land, and demands Arindal's sister Lora in marriage.

At this point begins the action. Directed by Groma, the noble Morald has set out with his companion Gunther to search for Arindal and induce him to return to his duties. Their arts of transformation, carried out under Groma's auspices — when Gunther appears to the hero in the guise of a sapient hermit, and Morald in that of his dead father—avail but little in the precincts of the Fairy King; nor has Gernot any greater success, with his song about the "Witch Dilnovaz," in rousing Arindal's mistrust against his wife; but Ada herself appears to her sorrowing husband, and sends him forth to his imperilled land, with the promise that he there shall see her on the morrow. First, however,—in the highly dramatic scene that ends this act—he must swear not to *curse* her, whatever evil may betide him. Arindal swears; his friends suspect some dreadful secret; the fairies triumph at the certainty that he must break his oath and wreck his happiness for ever; Ada is terrified at thought of the trials to which she herself must submit him.

The second act takes place in the halls of the royal burg of Tramond. Arindal's brave sister Lora, clad in armour, revives the courage of her beaten soldiers. Arindal, returning bowed

with sorrow by his severance from Ada, and filled with dire forebodings, finds his kingdom in the last extremity. It is Ada herself, who appears to be pushing the land's distress and his to their utmost height; before his eyes she throws his two children into a gulf of fire; she stands by the foe, routs the long-awaited allies, and rains terrors upon the besieged. The seed of doubt shoots up in Arindal; he can curb himself no longer, and curses the faithless wretch. All is explained at once; Ada restores to her husband their children, made immortal by the fire, and discloses to him that the "trusty Harald," whose army she had routed, was plotting treason and had fallen to the sword of Morald, whom everyone had given up for slain. In despair, Arindal recognises that this was the test appointed, a test he had withstood so ill that Ada must be turned to stone for a hundred years. Ada's lamentations, Arindal's frenzy of grief, and the rejoicings of the soldiery returning triumphant under Morald's lead, unite to form a majestic closing ensemble.—If the first act shews certain weaknesses in its poetic scheme, and at the very places where the poet has followed his source too implicitly, the second is all the more powerful in construction and climax. As Dr H. Reimann has remarked in course of a series of articles on this opera in the *Allg. Musikzeitung* (1888, Nos. 31 to 37), "The mind that planned this second act was predestined to the highest rank in musico-dramatic art. Shew us in all contemporary operatic literature one single act conceived with greater energy, or carried out with more poetic tact! It is a milestone in the evolutionary history of Wagnerian art."

In the third act Wagner says goodbye to Gozzi—who had changed the fairy into a snake, and disenchanted her by a kiss, to allow her as a mortal to follow the hero to his earthly kingdom. The story shapes otherwise with Wagner. Arindal, having delegated the regency to Morald and Lora, has fallen victim to madness. A most touching and dramatic monologue presents him to us in this state.* He imagines he is hunting that roe once again:

* In the fourth act of Kalidāsa's noted poem *Urvasi* (German by Dr K. G. A. Höfer, Berlin 1837) there is a scene of striking similarity to this. King Puru-ravas, wandering demented through the depths of the primeval forest in search of his lost beloved, at last finds her transformed into a bush, and

O see, the hind grows faint already!
I wing the bolt; lo! how it flies!
Good aim, haha! That pierced its heart.
But see, the hind can weep,
A tear-drop glistens in its eye!
What broken glance it turns on me!
How fair she is!
O horror! Nay, no beast is this!
Lo there! Lo there! It is my wife!—
(*He is overcome.*)

The painful vision is followed by a kindly one: he sees the gates of heaven opening, and breathes the balmy air of gods. Once more his frantic grief dispels the happy dream, but ends in gentle melancholy. He falls asleep, and the voice of the beloved pierces to him from the distance: "My husband Arindal, what hast thou done to me? Chill marble holds hot love within. . . . Through all confines love thrusts toward thee; hear'st thou its cry, so hither speed!" The voice of Ada is succeeded by that of Groma, urging him to the rescue, and telling of three gifts, a shield, a sword and lyre, which he awakes to find at his feet. With feigned compassion the fairies Farzana and Zemina conduct him on the way to Ada, the more surely to compass his death; Arindal rejoices at the prospect of shedding his blood in fight for Ada's freedom. They pass through awesome chasms filled with subterranean spirits; to the alarm of his two fairy guides, Arindal's magic weapons make him victor; in a twilight grot he at last beholds the stone of human stature into which his wife has been transformed. At Groma's call he strikes his lyre; his passionate song dissolves the spell; the stone takes on the shape of Ada, who sinks enraptured in his arms. Moved by their love and faith, the Fairy King confers immortal life on both; Morald and Lora, wed, retain the sovereignty of Arindal's terrestrial kingdom; he himself is led by Ada to the throne of Fairydom.—

On August 6, 1833, the first act was finished as to its composition. The music displays those balanced forms which Mozart had brought to the height of artistic perfection. But, as Reimann says in the analysis above-mentioned, "In *Die Feen* Wagner goes

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restores her to life by his embraces; even the admonishing voice of an invisible higher being, who bids him raise the jewel-of-reunion from the ground—*cf.* the magician Groma—is not lacking. No scene corresponding to this occurs in Gozzi.

beyond his models and masters in this respect, that he adds much to the effect of his scenes by an extremely characteristic orchestral ritornel. Every change of situation is matched exactly by these ritornels; the orchestra is already becoming an organ for expression of the unutterable-in-words. We may instance the postlude of the B flat quartet; Arindal's swooning and falling asleep; the apparition of Ada (with its transition to the "fairy" key of E major); the ritornel of the A minor aria, and so forth. Above all is this the case with Arindal's first appearance: in long-drawn notes the clarinets and flutes, echoed by horns, anticipate Arindal's plaintive cry of "Ada!" whilst the restless figure of the violins, in ascending sequence, depicts the anguish of his soul; and later at his words 'The desert echoes with her name' we hear the 'Ada' cry repeated with ever greater piercingness, in rhythmic diminution, till it reaches *fff*:—there you have the work of a master!"

About this time Albert returned from his starring, and Wagner was able to lay his work before him. "In my brother, whose judgment as a practised singer was of weight to me," says Richard in that often-quoted letter of 1834 to Hauser, "I had the severest, I might almost say, the most ruthless critic. He was up in arms at once about the inexecutability of some of the vocal part." So the author made alterations and improvements, wherever it could be done without despite to his intentions; though it is questionable how far Albert's objections were based on reality, or merely prompted by experience of the ways of singers. By the latter this cry of "inexecutable" or "unsingable" has since been raised at each new work of the master's, after practice had silenced it in the case of its immediate predecessor. But Richard might console himself with the final verdict of his present judge, which ran pretty much as follows: "The singers will dispute a lot about your work, and, alter as much as you like, they'll always complain of its difficulty; but if one only goes to it with intelligence, he may be sure of producing an effect."

It was Wagner's plan, to finish his opera in Wurzburg and return to Leipzig before the end of the year, to get it brought out as speedily as possible, counting much on Rosalie's influence and his own previous successes with the public of his birthplace. Therefore, as he had no wish to be hindered in his work's completion, the opportunity of taking another step toward independ-

ence, by accepting the post of conductor at the Zurich theatre, had less attraction for him than it might have had a year before. There were certainly a few difficulties in the way of a passport for Switzerland, as he was just of age for military service; but his family assured him that, in the opinion of competent persons, the legal papers in his hands were a sufficient permit for him to journey "into the world, or rather, to Zurich." The correspondence on this subject dates from the month of September: the present narrator (C. F. G.) has been accorded a glance into one of these letters, now safely housed at Wahnfried; a yellowed sheet, its first half written by brother Julius and dealing with the Leipzig Police-secretaries' views of the passport question, whilst in the second Rosalie takes up the tale: "You have only to *dare*, dear brother," she writes, "a thousand wishes from ourselves accompany you." There is something pathetic in finding this motto of his whole career, this meaning of his surname, first urged upon him by the gentle voice of his affectionate sister. She goes on to regret that his new work must remain uncompleted, under the circumstances, and they would not see him at Leipzig this winter; but is sure it will be for his good to wait a little longer, and bring it out himself as "Musikdirektor."

Wagner did *not* go to Zurich, whatever the cause. His own disinclination to fetter his hands would have something to do with it, though he appears to have resumed his office of chorus-master at the Wurzburg theatre for at least the opening of the autumn season; for in that letter to Hauser he speaks of two operas of Marschner's, the *Vampyr* and *Hans Heiling*, in the rehearsing of which he had assisted, and both of these works were given in the new theatrical year. This began on the 29th September with Marschner's *Vampyr*, followed a fortnight later (Oct. 15) by *Hans Heiling*; both works, in which Albert sang the parts of Aubry and Konrad, were frequently repeated. The Wurzburg *Vampyr* has an added interest for us, on account of the interpolation of a little occasional composition. While studying the part of Aubry, Albert got dissatisfied with the close of his aria (No. 15):

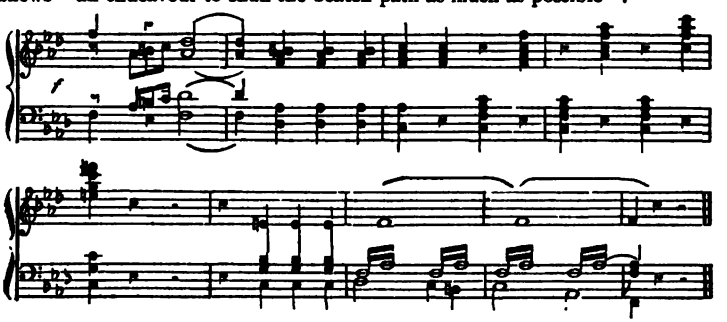
> Wie ein schöner Frühlingsmorgen
> Lag das Leben sonst vor mir,

and expressed his wish for a more effective ending. There was still a good week before the Sunday fixed for the performance;

but within two days (Sept. 23) Richard handed him a neatly-written score, embracing nineteen pages, with the inscription: "Allegro for Aubry's aria in the *Vampyr* of H. Marschner, composed for A. Wagner by his brother Richard Wagner." In place of the 58 bars in the original he had furnished 142 bars, "no mere appendage," says Tappert, "but a well-conceived and spirited Allegro in F minor," for which he had also indited the text:

Doch jetzt, wohin ich blicke, umgiebt mich Schreckensnacht,
mit grausigem Geschicke droht mir der Hölle Macht.
Ist denn kein Trost zu finden? Flieht jeder Hoffnungsstrahl?
Wie soll ich mich entwinden der grausen Todesqual?
Ich sehe sie, die Heissgeliebte,
den Schmerzensblick nach mir gewandt;
ein Dämon hält sie fest umschlungen
und lechzt vor scheusslicher Begier;
ihr theures Blut ist ihm verfallen,
ein einzig Wort, sie ist befreit,
vernichtet ist des Scheusals Werk:
da bindet mich der Eid—
ich muss sie sterben seh'n! *

Albert was very pleased with the thing; the orchestral parts were copied out, and on Sunday the 29th September the extended form of the aria made its first appearance, well received by the public. In his published writings Wagner himself has not a syllable to say about it, but in that letter to Hauser we find a brief allusion: "I wrote my brother an aria for interpolation, which certainly is neither better nor worse than any number in my opera [*Feen*], and it flatters me alike to have been witness

* Tappert has published a phototype of the last page of the autograph score of the "powerful and original orchestral postlude," with the remark that it shews "an endeavour to shun the beaten path as much as possible":

of its effect, as to hear again from Wurzburg that it continues to elicit great applause."

During the succeeding months the young artist bent his back to his opera; in unbroken sequence rose the imposing musical fabric of its second act, and the broad expanse of its third. The people's and soldiers' choruses in this second act, the unflagging dramatic climax with its unexpected incidents, the delightful humour of the bantering love-scene between Gernot and Drolla, the impressive aria for Ada, and finally the scene where the recurring melody of the "Dilnovaz" ballad indicates the first doubt awaking in Arindal's breast, to be repeated shrilly at the moment when the deluded husband breaks his vow and curses Ada,—all these, both in conception and in execution, display the youthful master at the height of his scenic and musical inspiration. To single out the repetition of that introductory theme from the Dilnovaz-ballad at the crucial moment, we here indeed have no actual leitmotiv in the sense of his later works, but merely a so-called reminiscence—yet of what startling power!

While still at work on his opera, Wagner got certain portions of it performed by the Wurzburg Music-union. "The numbers from it which I brought to a hearing at concerts in Wurzburg were favourably received," is all that he says in this connection in the *Autobiographic Sketch*. From that letter to Hauser we learn that they were a "terzet" and an "aria,"—"we got up both with no great difficulty, and they went off very well."

December had come round again; the vine-city was clad once more in its garment of white, and the trees of the Hofgarten stretched their naked arms towards the sky. But in the eight months since the melting of that snow which greeted his arrival in Wurzburg, his first grand work had thriven to its own broad crown of leaves. On Sunday the first of December the second act was finished in full score; a week later, at mid-day on the eighth of December 1833, when the bells were all ringing, he wrote the words "*Finis. Laudetur Deus.* Richard Wagner" on the last page of the completed sketch for the third act, whose successful conclusion he announced to his people at Leipzig, and more particularly to his sympathetic sister, in a beautiful letter still preserved. The overture bears the terminal date of December 27, and a few days later—while a terrific storm on New Year's eve was unroofing houses and bursting in windows at Leipzig—the

last note of the score of the third act was committed to paper, January 1, 1834.

There was nothing further to detain its author at Wurzburg. He was longing to see his dramatic first-born afoot upon the boards; and that he could only expect in his native city. Even before its absolute completion, preliminary negotiations had been opened with the Leipzig theatre; it now was time to set out in person, and take the requisite steps on the spot. So with the new year Wagner left for home—the symphonist and overture-composer developed in this twelvemonth to a dramatic creator.

II.

"DAS LIEBESVERBOT."

Return to Leipzig.—"Feen" negotiations.—Director Ringelhardt and Regisseur Hauser.—Representation postponed.—Schröder-Devrient as Romeo.—Article on "German Opera": against "learnedness in music."—Relations with Robert Schumann.—Poem of "Das Liebesverbot" written at Teplitz.—Off to Magdeburg.

> *To the earnestness of my original promptings* (*in* Die Feen) *there opposed itself in* Das Liebesverbot *a certain wanton turmoil of the senses, which seemed in crying contrast to the earlier mood. The balancing of these two tendencies was to be the work of my further artistic development.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

WITH the best hopes of his completed work and its speedy production Wagner returned to Leipzig at the beginning of 1834, welcomed all the more warmly by mother and sisters as in his absence he had become the object of a twofold pride. He was re-entering the family circle as at once the composer of a whole grand opera and the approved fulfiller of a first practical function. It would be difficult to decide in which capacity his mother set most store by him.

Naturally his first thoughts were for the fate of his work. The position of affairs at the Leipzig theatre had altered since its abandonment by the Court: it had become a Town-theatre again, and for the last two years had been managed by Director Friedrich Seebald Ringelhardt, a shrewd man of business, who through his predilection for French and Italian operas and many "novelties," if only not of German origin, had delighted the municipal council by restoring the establishment to its condition when under Küstner, —namely of boasting a constant surplus in its exchequer, instead of the usual deficit. In the Play his classics were Kotzebue, Schröder and Iffland, with other antiquated philistines, in whose

pieces he was fond of disporting himself as heavy father or old man; like the Greeks, he had one standing mask for tragedy—the Town-musician Miller; the poetry of drama, as Napoleon many another thing, he held for ideology. Such was the man young Richard had to approach. He reaped the experience that "the German composer had had his nose put out of joint on his native stage by the successes of French and Italians, and the production of an opera was a favour the German author must beg on his knees."

True, Ringelhardt at first declared his willingness to yield to Richard's importunity, backed up by Rosalie; and in March friend Laube was able to insert a brief note in the *Elegante* to the effect that, besides Auber's *Bal masqué*, "an opera by a young composer, Richard Wagner, whom we have already praised most highly in these columns," would presently be mounted. But it was a long cry from promise to fulfilment; and in the very quarter where the young artist's cause might have been furthered by a hint to the director—that of the Kapellmeister and Regisseur—he was met by a stubborn rebuff, masked under the outward forms of kindness and good-will. In the preceding pages we have made frequent reference to a document from this earliest time of struggle, a letter to the operatic manager at the Leipzig theatre, Franz Hauser.* It has come down to us merely in its initial form of a hastily scribbled draft, with many negligences of diction, but presents so clear a picture of the antecedent negotiations by word of mouth that we almost hear the two sides speaking. Plainly, the writer is disgusted at being compelled to waste his time and breath upon the opposition offered him, but he has not yet abandoned faith in the good-will of his antagonist, and refuses to lose his temper; he treats

* In the possession of the Richard Wagner Museum, now at Eisenach.—Regisseur—i.e. stage-manager—Hauser is described in a report to the *Allg. mus. Ztg.* (1833, No. 11) as "a man of many-sided culture and intimately acquainted with our older music, particularly that of *Bach*"; he is also said to be a capital bass singer and character-actor. In the same journal (1835, No. 25) reference is made to his passion for old musical manuscripts, of which he owned a large collection. To this old fogey was entrusted judgment of the *Feen* score!—His natural gifts and accomplishments as singer are said to have not been much to speak of, yet he was credited on all hands with "intelligence, artistic education, musical understanding, a penetrative study of rôles and a rightly characteristic reading of vocal parts" (*Abendzeitung*, August 20, 1834). Can't one see the sheer nonentity in the very vagueness of the praise dealt out to him?—He was a personal friend of Mendelssohn's.

every objection of a narrow and cross-grained mind as well-meant friendly counsel, and does his best to answer it. The following extracts may be added to those we have quoted before :—

"You do not like my opera; what is more, you do not like my whole tendency, since you declare it contrary to your own view of art. In it you find all the offences of our age; at the same time you allow of no appeal to the latter. You will accept none but the forms in which those unattainable models of an older age expressed themselves, and even with Mozart you find excessive use of outward means; from which I gather that you sanction none save those of Gluck. You ask me why I do not instrument like Haydn. . . . You charge me with total ignorance of means, of harmony, and want of thorough study; you find nothing that has come from the heart, meet with nothing that could have sprung from an inward inspiration. If I mistake not, this is about the sum of your charges as regards the *value* of the work, what I am to take as the upshot of your verdict. I have given myself the pains to piece it together, as nearly as maybe,—and find nothing to say in rejoinder. This is the position of the blamed towards the blamer, toward blame itself. All endeavour to refute the blame, or even to excuse oneself, I suppose to be impermissible and impossible to the blamed. I am silent—for all resistance seems to me presumption." He turns from the artistic "value" of his work to the other side, its "practicability"; for like objections had been raised against its possibility of performance. He winds up with a plea "to regard the thing a little less severely," concluding: "For my own position and the road I have to carve myself, both I and my relatives feel it absolutely necessary to take this step, and—illusions, we know, are most common—but I think it will not lead me to perdition. Please place no decisive obstacle in the path the negotiations have taken now, and permit me to pursue in peace what I may term the regular course, that of sending for the score to lay it in the official hands of the Kapellmeister. Once again, may God be with me!"

So the score passed into the hands of Kapellmeister Stegmayer, but without material benefit; the unfavourable verdict of the "intelligent" first court seems to have influenced that of second instance. It would be impossible to adopt a humbler or a heartier tone, than that of the letter just cited, without some loss of personal dignity; but all conciliation shipwrecked on a crotchety

wrongheadedness.* The affair was spun to an exasperating length of indecision.

Like so many another turning-point in Wagner's career, we cannot look back on this cruel fate of *Die Feen* without a lively feeling of resentment: a creation full of warm young life allowed to vanish into limbo! If the work had but wormed its way to a hearing at Leipzig, how it must have smoothed its author's future path! It would have been impossible for it not to have left some impression on his birthplace; once recognised and noised abroad, it could not lightly have been shelved again; and we should all along have dated Wagner from this pregnant early stage of his development, instead of from *Rienzi*.

For the present it was, nominally, a mere case of postponement. If the young master had been content to rest on his oars for the next two or three years, and devote all his time to insisting on the production of his firstborn, his patience and sterility might haply have been rewarded in the long run by gracious acceptance of his opera. Laube had announced it in the same breath with Auber's *Maskenball*, as about to appear. To mount the latter properly, the management had thought nothing of an outlay of 2000 thlr. (£300), for entirely new costumes, scenery and accessories; after its first performance Director Ringelhardt was called before the curtain, to receive the thanks of Leipzigers proud to be "the first in all Germany to hear Auber's Masked Ball" (*Abendzeitung*, 1834, No. 197).

Still earlier in the selfsame Spring, just about the time when native talent had its access to the stage so studiously blocked, Bellini's *Montechi e Capuleti* had plunged all Leipzig into wild excitement. This opera was received with thunders of applause, and the finale of the second act had to be repeated at every performance, to enable the audience to hear the enrapturing unison

* When Spontini put forth all his influence against the Berlin performance of *Der Freischütz*, Weber complained to his friend Sir George Smart: "It is deplorable that people should have installed an *Italian* to pass sentence on German works, which he is in no position to appreciate. To be sure, I myself am Kapellmeister, and have to give my verdict on the works of foreigners; but only when I can conscientiously say with full knowledge that a work is absolutely worthless, do I refuse it a performance. Surely every aspirant ought to have the chance of appealing at least once to the judgment of the public." Here it was "no installed Italian," but that made no difference in the complexion of his verdict.

of Romeo and Juliet all over again. Frau Schröder-Devrient was shortly to arrive, to sing the part of Romeo; the music was to be heard in every street; Bellini ruled the city. Of course the devotees of Classic music shrugged their shoulders, whispering dreadful things in the pit about careless workmanship, bad part-writing etc.; whilst the feeble adaptation of the very play for whose sake he had once learnt English could rouse but little sympathy in the breast of the young creator of *Die Feen*. But the Queen of the Stage at last appeared, at the zenith of her fame and powers. Laube paints a word-picture of the dappled March-day, 1834, when sun and shadow played romps like children, chasing each other across the market-place, and a breezy German afternoon blew away all zest for book-work; to-night the Schröder-Devrient was to sing, and ere the finger of the Rathhaus clock had moved to five, and there still was ample time before the office opened, the town was streaming in but one direction; the square was alive with frowzy old periwigs, all jogging toward the theatre; the Schröder-Devrient even drew the philistine. The impression left on Wagner by the Romeo of this great tragedian was ineffaceable; never had he more thoroughly agreed with his literary friend, than when the latter called Wilhelmine Schröder own daughter to William Shakespeare, and the whole family descendants of the old Greek gods. In 1872 Richard Wagner writes: "Take the impersonation of 'Romeo' in Bellini's opera once given us by the Schröder-Devrient. Every instinct of the musician rebels against allowing the least artistic merit to the sickly, downright threadbare music here hung upon an opera-book of indigent grotesqueness; but ask anyone who witnessed it, what impression he received from the 'Romeo' of Frau Schröder-Devrient as compared with the Romeo of our finest actor in the great Briton's piece itself" (*P. W.* V., 141). Like a lightning-flash the thought occurred to him, what an incomparable artwork would that be, which in all its parts should mate the talents of such a performer, of a whole group of artists like her. The ideal, the ideal no longer of "opera," but of the perfect word-tone Drama, had shot its first flickering ray athwart the clouds.

But how did the inexpressible beauty of this portrayal accord with the feebleness of its textual and musical basis? Manifestly there was no necessary inner relation between that incorporate ideal and so-called "charming verse and pretty music." The

young artist, with the cold shoulder just given to a nobly earnest work, began to doubt the choice of means to great successes. Far from assigning to Bellini a merit due entirely to the actress, yet "the stuff of which this music was made seemed more propitious, better calculated to wake warm life, than the painstaking pedantry wherewith German composers, as a rule, but brought laborious make-believes to birth. The flabby lack of character in our modern Italians, equally with the frivolous levity of the latest Frenchmen, appeared to me to challenge the earnest, conscientious German to lay hands on the better-chosen, more successfully exploited means of his rivals, and then outstrip them in producing veritable artworks" (*P. W.* I., 9).

The turn now taken by his whole artistic nature is stamped on Wagner's earliest literary utterance, a work of little length and unsigned with his still un-noted name, but high in its significance as a first confession of faith. He was just one-and-twenty years of age, "inclined to take life and the world on their pleasant side." Instead of Hoffmann he had taken up with Heinse's *Ardinghello*, which paints the joyous sensualism of the South in glowing colours, reflected in the literary work of Laube. "Young Europe" was tingling in his every limb, and Germany appeared a very tiny portion of the earth. "I had emerged from abstract mysticism, and learnt a love for matter. Beauty of material and brilliancy of wit were lordly things to me. As regards music, I found them both in the French and Italians." Everything around him seemed fermenting; it was most natural to yield himself resistless to the ferment, too, and forswear his former models.

So actively was this Cosmopolitan spirit at work on his fiery temperament, that he threw together the thoughts it had inspired him with in the form of an article on *German Opera* for the journal of his friend, just to throw light on "the confusion of ideas prevailing among our Teutomaniac music-savants." The article appeared in the *Ztg. f. d. elegante Welt* of June 10, 1834, and thus proceeds: "By all means, we have a field of music which belongs to us by right,—and that is Instrumental music;—but a German Opera we have not, and for the selfsame reason that we own no national Drama. We are too intellectual and much too learned, to create warm human figures. . . . In this respect the Italians have an immeasurable advantage over us; vocal beauty with them is a second nature, and their creations are

just as sensuously warm as poor, for the rest, in individual import. Certainly, in the last decad or two the Italians have played as many pranks with this second native-tongue of theirs, as the Germans with their learning,—and yet, I shall never forget the impression lately made on me by a Bellinian opera, after I had grown heartily sick of the eternally allegorising orchestral bustle, and at last a simple noble song shewed forth again,"—with a Schröder-Devrient as the singer!—Then with all the fervour of the future reformer the young artist goes on to break a lance on spurious German *learnedness* in music:—

"This is an evil which, however ingrained in the character of our nation, must needs be rooted out; in fact it will annul itself, as it is nothing but a self-deception. Not that I wish French or Italian music to oust our own;—that would be a fresh evil to be on our guard against—but we ought to recognise the *true* in both, and keep ourselves from all self-satisfied hypocrisy. We should clear ourselves a breathing-space in the rubble that threatens to choke us, hug no more visions of forbidden fifths and superfluous ninths, and become men at last. . . . Why has no German opera-composer come to the front since so long? Because none knew how to gain the ear of the people,—that is to say, because none has seized true warm Life as it is. For is it not plainly to misconstrue the present age, to go on writing oratorios when no one believes any longer in either their contents or their form? Who believes in the mendacious stiffness of a Schneiderian fugue? and simply because it was composed *to-day* by Friedrich Schneider. What with Bach and Handel seems worshipful to us in virtue of its truth, must necessarily sound ridiculous with Fr. Schneider of our day; for, to repeat it, no one *believes* him, since it cannot be his own conviction. We must take the era by the ears, and honestly try to cultivate its modern forms; and he will be master, who writes neither Italian, nor French—nor even German." (*P. W.* VIII., 55-58).

Nor even German: no impotence of erudition. Warm human figures are what he wants, shapes worthy at each instant of a live artist such as the great Wilhelmine; what stands in their way, may go by the board. Here everything springs from a true dramatic instinct, foreshadowing the master's later teaching. Six years hence, when in Paris, he writes: "The German genius would seem predestined to seek out among its neighbours that

which is not native to its motherland, to lift this from its narrow confines, and thus *make something universal for the world.*" * Is not this the identical thought expressed in the closing lines of *German Opera*?

Among the younger musicians of Wagner's set in Leipzig we here may mention Robert Schumann; though it never came to any actual comradeship, there existed a friendly relation between them at this period. In a previous chapter we have spoken of Schumann as a pupil of Dorn's; obedient to a thoroughly German impulse, he had passed from jurisprudence to music. Friedrich Wieck had been his first music-master, when he contemplated a career of virtuoso; but, after a successful commencement as pianist, an irremediable injury to the hand had diverted him to the more distinguished path of composer and writer on music. Different as were their natures—Wagner merry, communicative, fond of society, Schumann melancholy, silent and introspective,—they yet had many points of contact: a combination of musical and literary tastes, for instance Schumann's pronounced passion for Hoffmann, though in his case it was allied with a boundless regard for Jean Paul, not shared by Wagner in a like degree. At this time, when the far more active spirit of his junior (by two years) had already produced a grand symphony and a complete three-act opera, Schumann had merely turned out a few pianoforte bagatelles; but in these his individuality was plainly enough revealed. On the other hand, his standpoint toward the public was far more favourable: whereas Wagner's gifts had to lie buried for several years to come, his own had an unimpeded course before them; the straits of the dramatic composer were none of his. To become known, he needed no stage and company of singers, solely a

* As late as January 12, 1879, Wagner remarked to Hans von Wolzogen, in course of conversation: "The long-drawn melodic form of the Italian operatic composers, such as Cherubini and Spontini, could not issue from the German Singspiel; it needs must have its rise in Italy. . . . From it have Auber, Boieldieu, and myself, learnt much. My closing chorus in the first act of *Lohengrin*, for instance, derives far rather from Spontini than from Weber. From Bellini, too, one may learn what Melody is. The moderns are distinguished by a poverty-stricken melody, because they hold by certain prominent weaknesses in Italian Opera, but neglect the composers' great merits." Wolzogen, *Erinnerungen an Richard Wagner*, 2nd ed. (Reclam) pp. 26-27.

publisher; and for that his position as editor of a much-read journal was sufficient guarantee. "You may believe me," he writes to Dorn, "if the publishers had no fear of the editor, the world would have heard nothing of me either." It still would happen that benighted people had never heard of him—as on a subsequent concert-tour of his wife's (Clara Wieck) when he was presented to the King of Holland as her husband, and the king inquired if he too were musical,—but on Wagner's part, even so early as this, no such ignorance was possible. Wagner always valued Schumann, not only as "the most gifted and thoughtful musician of his period" (*P. W.* III., 117), but also as the "stout of heart" who "so warmly and so amiably held out his German hand, when editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, to the very people on whom he looked askance in his second period" (*ibid*).* And it was just this *Neue Zeitschrift*, for which Schumann was so anxious to obtain congenial workers, that seems to have offered the ground for closer relations. Three years before, upon Chopin's first appearance in the musical world, Schumann had made his début in musical literature; in April 1834, supported by Friedrich Wieck, Ludwig Schunke and Julius Knorr, he founded his special organ, and thus began his actual and undoubtedly considerable literary career. For this he sought Wagner's co-operation also. Although at a stage in his evolution when he was far more intent upon plying his art than criticising it, Wagner in fact sent a contribution to the *Neue Zeitschrift* of Nov. 6 and 10, 1834 ("Pasticcio," see *Prose Works*, VIII., 59-66), and allowed his name to appear in the printed list of collaborators for several years to come.

In May our artist made an excursion to the Bohemian baths. At Teplitz when the morning was fine he would steal away from

* "Wagner has been sedulously represented as an adversary of Schumann's. This is a wellnigh ridiculous reversal of the situation. An enmity of the dramatist against the lyrist is out of the question; but what remains deplorable, is the experience that it is just the 'Schumannites' who from the very beginning have been the bitterest and blindest adversaries of Wagner. Whoever clove to him, had to find himself regarded in that quarter as a moral delinquent; whereas Wagner gladly rendered to the artist Schumann the full justice due to every genuine thing" (H. v. Wolzogen, *Erinnerungen an Richard Wagner*, p. 33).—Nevertheless, Wagner did not admire the Schumann of that "second period," as may be seen upon referring to the page cited in the text above, written in 1869.—W. A. E.

his companions, to climb the steps to the Schlackenburg and eat his breakfast in solitude. There, with the little town and smiling valley spread before him in bright sunshine, the countless hamlets snuggling in folds of the land or perched on dwarf hills, while the horizon stretched from the Schlossberg to the wood-crowned heights of the Mileschauer, he jotted down in his notebook the sketch for a new opera-poem, to vent the bubbling "Young European" joy-of-life within him. It was the text of *Das Liebesverbot*, otherwise known as "The Novice of Palermo," its argument as follows:—

An unnamed King of Sicily leaves his country on a journey to Naples, and appoints as his Stateholder a strait-laced puritanic German, named Friedrich, with full authority to reform the manners of his capital. At the commencement of the piece his agents are closing or demolishing certain houses of amusement in the suburbs; the mob interferes; in the midst of the riot a comic Chief Constable reads out the edict, proscribing "Love, wine and carnival." It is greeted with a chorus of derision:

Der deutsche Narr, auf, lacht ihn aus!	Come laugh him down, the German fool!
das soll die ganze Antwort sein!	No other answer on him waste!
Schickt ihn in seinen Schnee nach Haus,	Send him amid his snow to cool;
dort lasst ihn keusch und nüchtern sein!	There let him sober be and chaste!

during which a young rakish noble, Luzio by name, constitutes himself the people's leader. He soon enough finds matter for agitation, as his friend Claudio is led along to prison, arrested for an indiscretion with the lady to whom he is secretly betrothed. The penalty under a mouldering old law unearthed by Friedrich being decapitation, Claudio's only hope is that his sister Isabella, who has just entered the cloister as a novice, may succeed in softening the tyrant's heart; Luzio promises to go at once to her.—The next scene introduces Isabella in conversation with Marianne, another novice; Marianne unfolds a tale of treachery, her betrayer proving to be none other than Friedrich himself. Luzio arrives at the moment of Isabella's greatest indignation, and adds fuel to the fire by his tidings of her brother's fate; her spirited defiance moves him to a declaration of love; she quickly brings him to his senses, but accepts his escort to the hall of justice.—The third scene commences with a burlesque

trial of various moral offenders by Brighella, the Chief Constable. Friedrich next appears, enjoining silence on the uproarious mob that has forced the doors, and begins the serious hearing of Claudio; he is on the point of passing sentence, when Isabella arrives, and demands a private audience. The court is cleared, and Isabella pleads, at first with eloquent moderation, for pardon of her brother's very human fault:

Du schmähest jene and're Liebe, die Gott gesenkt in uns're Brust!
O wie so öde das Leben bliebe, gäb' es nicht Lieb' und Liebeslust!
Dem Weib gab Schönheit die Natur, dem Manne Kraft sie zu geniessen,
und nur ein Thor, ein Heuchler nur sucht sich der Liebe zu verschliessen.
O öffne der Erdenliebe dein Herz,— löse durch Gnade meinen Schmerz!

Perceiving the effect of her pleading, she proceeds with ever greater fire to probe the hidden secrets of the judge's heart. The ice of that heart is thawed: "How warm her breath—how eloquent her tongue! Am I a man? Woe's me, I yield already." The stern guardian of morals is seized with passion for the splendid woman; no longer master of himself, he promises her whatever she may ask, at price of her own body. In utmost fury at such hideous villainy she calls in the people, to unmask the hypocrite; he threatens her with a trumped-up story; suddenly conceiving a stratagem to save her brother's life, beneath her breath she promises fulfilment of his fondest wishes on the following night.

At the beginning of the second act we learn the nature of her hasty plan. She gains admission to her brother's gaol, to prove if he be worth the saving. Claudio is shocked at first by the suggested sacrifice, but when it comes to bidding his sister farewell, and entrusting her with tender messages for his beloved, his manliness breaks down, and shamefacedly he asks if the price of his deliverance is quite beyond her. Thrusting the craven from her in contempt, she returns him to his gaoler; but she merely means to punish him by prolonging his uncertainty, and still abides by her decision to rid the world of his shameful judge. She has arranged for Marianne to take her place in the rendezvous with Friedrich, to whom she now despatches her invitation, appointing a masked encounter at one of the disreputable houses which he has closed. Meantime she teaches Luzio a lesson, by leading him to believe that she seriously intends meeting Friedrich that night. Luzio, in an agony of

despair, summons all his friends to the Corso at nightfall, and just as revelry is waxing wild there he goads the crowd to frenzy with a daring Carnival-song:

Ihr junges Volk, macht euch heran,
die Larven vor, die Farben an,
Heut' ist Beginn des Carneval,
Herbei, herbei, ihr Leute all,
. . . .
Im Jubelrausch und Hochgenuss
Zum Teufel fahre der Verdruss
Wer sich nicht freut am Carneval,
Herbei, herbei, ihr Leute all,

die Alltagskleider abgethan,
die bunten Wämser angethan!
da wird man seiner sich bewusst!
nun giebt es Spass, jetzt giebt es Lust!
. . . .
ertränkt die gold'ne Freudenzeit,
und hin zur Hölle Traurigkeit.
dem stosst das Messer in die Brust!
es war zum Spass, es war zur Lust!

The maskers throng towards the background, while Luzio lies in wait. Presently he recognises one of the maskers as Friedrich, and is about to follow him with drawn rapier, when Isabella causes him to be led on a wrong scent. Isabella comes forth from the bushes in which she has stood concealed, rejoicing in the thought of having restored Marianne to her faithless mate at this very moment, and believing herself to be in possession of the stipulated patent of her brother's pardon. Breaking its seal, she discovers an aggravation of the order for execution. (After a hard battle with the flames of lust, Friedrich has resolved that, however criminal his fall, it yet shall be as a man of honour: one hour on Isabella's bosom, and then his death in obedience to the selfsame law to which the head of Claudio stands irrevocably forfeit,—"Claudio, thou diest; I follow after.") Isabella, considering this but an additional villainy of the hypocrite, once more bursts out in frenzy of despair; at her call to instant revolt against the tyrant, the whole populace assembles in wild confusion. Luzio, arriving on the scene at this juncture, sardonically adjures the mob to pay no heed to the ravings of a woman who will dupe them as assuredly as she has deceived him; for he still believes in her dishonour. Suddenly Brighella's comical cry for help is heard; jealous about his own inamorata, he has seized the disguised Stateholder by mistake, thus leading to his discovery. Friedrich is unmasked; Marianne, clinging to his side, is recognised; general indignation, jeers and laughter. Friedrich moodily demands to be led before the returning King, to receive the capital sentence; Claudio, freed from prison by the mob, instructs him that death is no penalty for a love-offence. The

King's arrival is announced; all the maskers go in procession to meet him: "Gay festivals delight him more than all your gloomy edicts." Friedrich and Marianne are made to lead off the procession; the Novice, lost to the cloister for ever, forms the second pair with Luzio.

As will be seen at once, the groundwork of *Das Liebesverbot* is borrowed from *Measure for Measure;* yet, despite the retention of so many of Shakespeare's incidents, an entirely different complexion is given to the tale. That Wagner should have drawn on Shakespeare for a plot, is by no means extraordinary, if we bear in mind that personation of Romeo by Frau Schröder-Devrient which had so shortly gone before: what *is* remarkable, is the instinct which guided him to the only one of Shakespeare's undisputed plays that all the better critics now admit to be susceptible of radical improvement. In his *Study of Shakespeare* C. A. Swinburne remarks: "The strong and radical objection distinctly brought forward against this play, and strenuously supported by the wisest and the warmest devotees among all the worshippers of Shakespeare, is not exactly this, that the Puritan Angelo is exposed: it is that the Puritan Angelo is unpunished. . . . We are left hungry and thirsty after having been made to thirst and hunger for some wholesome single grain at least of righteous and too long retarded retribution. . . . That this play is in its very inmost essence a tragedy . . . the mere tone of style prevalent throughout all its better parts, to the absolute exclusion of any other, would of itself most amply suffice to show. . . . The evasion of a tragic end by the invention and intromission of Marianne has deserved and received high praise for its ingenuity: but ingenious evasion of a natural and proper end is usually the distinctive quality which denotes a workman of a very much lower school than the school of Shakespeare." So much in unintentional justification of Wagner's boldness in laying hands on this particular play: there was a flaw in it, which would naturally tempt the intrepid youngster.

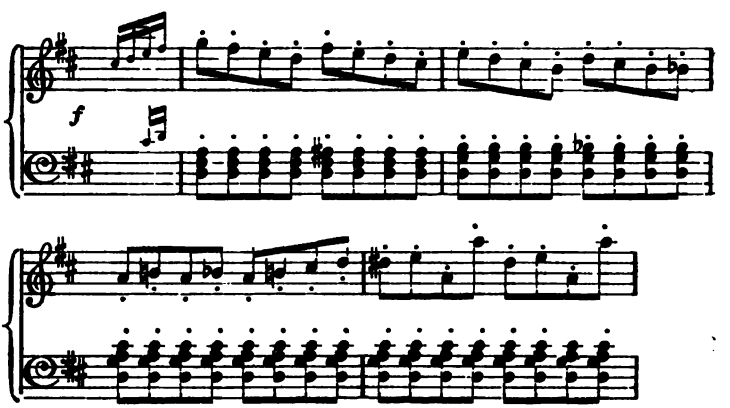
Now, there would be two ways of rectifying *Measure for Measure*, both of them suggested in the above extract from Swinburne. One way would be, to exact from Angelo-Friedrich himself the full penalty he had adjudged to Claudio, and thus supply a "tragic end." The other might be to alter the "prevalent

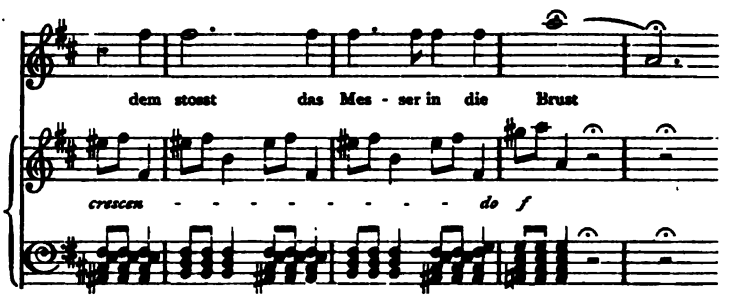
tone of style," and turn the work into a tragi-comedy. The first course would in nowise have accorded with young Wagner's instant frame of mind; for his purposes, he did well to choose the second. He shifts the centre of gravity from Angelo and the Duke to Isabella, at the same time transforming the mere ribald Lucio—Shakespeare's "whipping-boy," so to speak—into an important and highly sympathetic character. Again, while Friedrich's original villainy is retained, it is to a large extent redeemed by his spontaneous resolve to submit to the same decree of death he means to execute on Claudio,—a point perhaps suggested by Shakespeare's lines, "When I that censure him, do so offend, Let mine own judgment pattern out my death"; but in *Measure for Measure* this is said by Angelo when there appears no possibility of his "so offending," in fact before he has ever clapped eyes on Isabella; whereas he brazens out denial to the Duke, on his return, till all escape is blocked—*after* which he says, "Immediate sentence then and sequent death is all the grace I beg." Thirdly, and most significant of all, the "people" are here made active interveners in a manner that would never have occurred to the politically conservative Shakespeare; on them and their lightheartedness, instead of on the somewhat tricky Duke, devolves the office of punishing the offender; and they punish him right heartily with ridicule.

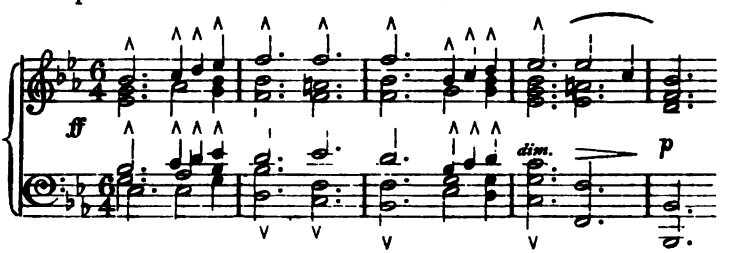
To lend colour to these changes, nothing could have been happier than Wagner's transference of the scene of action from Vienna to Palermo; as he himself says, "the Sicilian Vespers may have had something to do with it"; whilst the German name of "Friedrich," with which he has re-christened Shakespeare's Angelo, would point to the same conclusions as his lashing of German pedantry in that article just dealt with. In the powerful part of Isabella we certainly have a first suggestion of the *Tannhäuser* problem, the redemption of an erring man by a spotless virgin; but it presents itself differently to the youth of one-and-twenty, and the whole drama is distinguished by its glowing championship of the rights of the senses.

The form of this piece shews the characteristic influence exerted on the dramatist, in Wagner's twofold nature, by the musician. It is his only work in *two* acts. The various movements of the animated plot whirl by in swift succession: we are hurried from the riotous mob in the first scene to the silence of the cloister,

and thence to the hall of justice; from the gloomy solitude of prison to the turbulence of Corso and of Carnival. Just as Weber and Marschner, with their ampler musical expression, quite obviously lent its breadth to the dramatic structure of *Die Feen*, so the influence of Auber's and Bellini's music here bore upon the method of the plot's arrangement. Wagner himself speaks of "the reflex of modern French and—as concerns the melody—Italian Opera upon my violently excited senses," and goes on to say: "Whoever should take the pains to compare this composition with that of *Die Feen*, would scarcely be able to understand how so surprising a change of front should have been brought about in so short a time" (*P. W.* I., 296).

The chief distinctive mark of the *Liebesverbot* music is considered by Gasperini to be a preponderance of the melodic, over the harmonic or idealistic, element*: "From the first note of the overture, one breathes another atmosphere; everything is alive, clear, entrainant; no bizarre harmonies, no daring combinations; through the whole score there circulates a *mélodie abondante et lumineuse*." It reaches white heat in the fiery Carnival song, with its provocative introductory trills for triangle, castanets and tambourines, when the *Allegro vivace*

boils up to the double fermata portending the dagger-thrust

* The score is not accessible now, being in the possession of the King of Bavaria.

and passes over to the *feroce* of the rousing "Tralala." On the other hand the subject's latent kinship to *Tannhäuser* comes out in the most remarkable fashion in the definite anticipation of a musical theme,—compare the following with that of the "hymn of Promise" as first announced by trumpets, trombones and tuba, in the prelude to the third act of *Tannhäuser*:



Here we have an instance of that inner cohesion in the music of *all* Wagner's works, which makes it impossible not to regard them as members of one great organic whole, but gradually revealing itself. Thus certain harmonic likenesses will often transfer us, for a moment, from the sphere of one work to that of another; and thus, as in the present case, a theme expressive of some definite mood or plastic thought will pass almost integrally from this to that creation.

Two whole years, however, were to elapse between the drafting of this poem, in the summer of 1834, and its musical completion. For, immediately after Wagner's return to Leipzig from his little outing, he entered negotiations destined to put an end to his state of happy irresponsibility and fetter him to a practical career. He was offered the vacant post of musical conductor to Bethmann's Magdeburg stage-company, and delayed no longer in making the apparently inevitable sacrifice of his artistic freedom to his outward independence.

III.

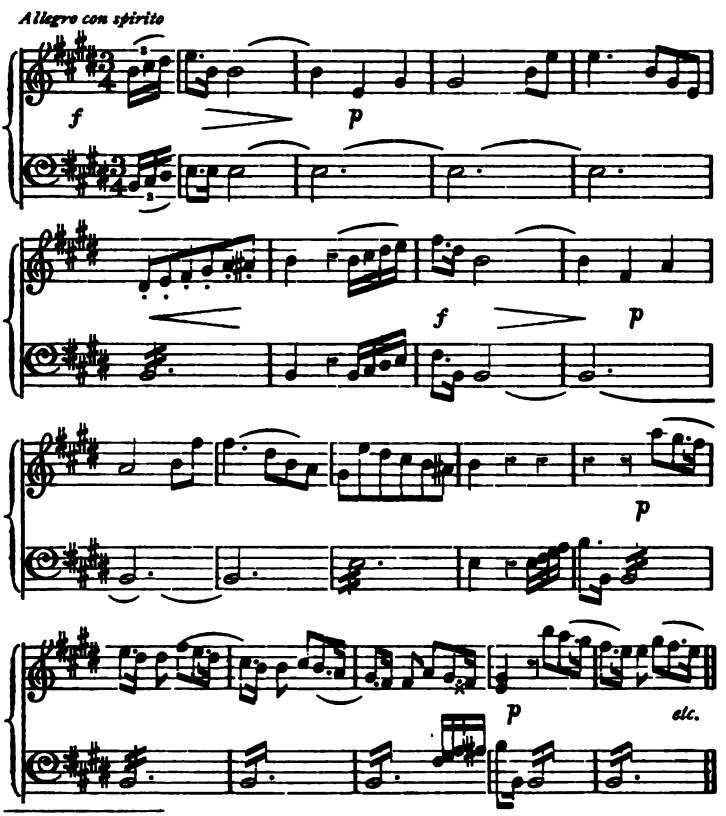
MAGDEBURG.

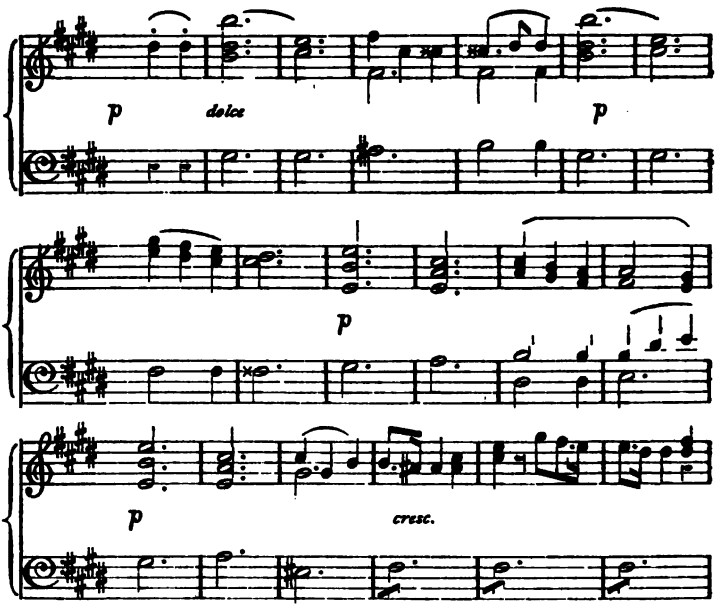
Lauchstädt and Rudolstadt.—Symphony in E.—Magdeburg.—Apathy of the Public.—Last fortunes of "Die Feen."—New Year's music.—Columbus-overture.—Betrothal to Minna Planer.—The "Schweizerfamilie" at Nuremberg.—Death of uncle Adolf.—Auber's "Lestocq."—Performance of "Das Liebesverbot."

I erred of old, and now would fain repay it;
from youth's offence how shall I set me free?
The work, at feet of thine I humbly lay it,
that thy abounding grace my ransom be.
(Dedication of *Das Liebesverbot* to King Ludwig II.)

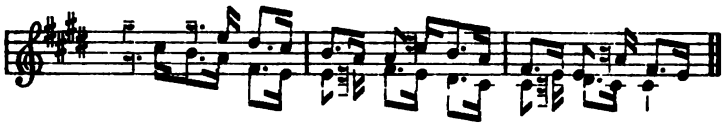
TOWARDS the end of July 1834, just past his one-and-twentieth birthday, Richard Wagner took up his first position as Conductor. The Bethmann stage-company was then engaged at Magdeburg for the winter, at Lauchstädt and Rudolstadt in summer. A few years previously its director, Heinrich Bethmann, had brought his company to Leipzig during the Easter fair, as a stopgap in the interregnum prior to the opening of the Court theatre. Among other eminent qualifications for his post, he possessed that of maintaining his theatre in a perennial state of bankruptcy —in spite of a Royal subvention and the assistance of a Theatre Committee,—and consequently had a rooted antipathy to pay-day. The utter chaos in the finances of the first theatre at which he was regularly engaged had a disastrous and far-reaching effect on Wagner's economic relations.

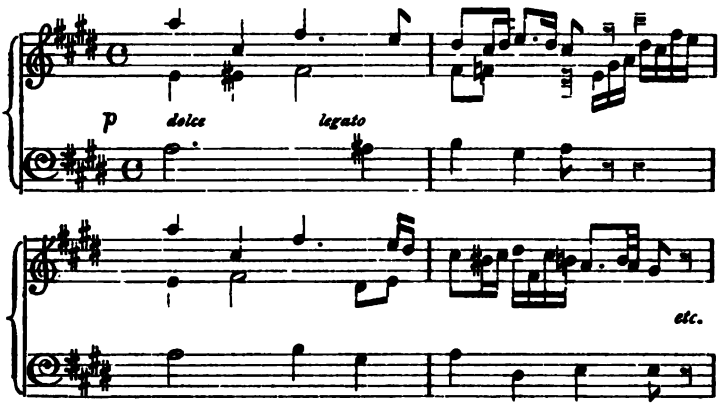
The company remained at Lauchstädt till the middle of August, when it migrated to the charming little capital of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt in the leafy valley of the Saale, with its towering Heidecksburg—the prince's residence—its romantic park, and shooting-box on the Anger. In the midst of all the young conductor's duties at rehearsals and performances his tireless mind was busied with the drafting of a new grand *symphony*, this time in E. The sketch for the first movement, an *Allegro*, is

closely written on a large double-sheet of stout yellowish note-paper,* dated at the top "Lauchstädt, the 4th August, 34," and at the bottom, "29 August, Rudolstadt." To the efforts and research of W. Tappert we owe its discovery after half a century of oblivion, as also that of the orchestral parts of the earlier Symphony in C. According to his report the Symphony in E is conceived in quite the Beethovenian spirit, structure and distribution shew no material departure from the principles of classical tradition, the whole is powerful and clear. Several of its salient points have been reproduced by the discoverer, including the "fresh and flowing" introductory theme of the *Allegro*:

* "The lines are drawn with the music-pen unaided by a ruler; on the first three pages there are fifteen double-staves apiece, on the last page sixteen"

with some interesting indications of its further progress; also the tender second theme:

with its contrapuntal development:

(W. Tappert's article on "Richard Wagner's zweite Symphonie" in the *Mus. Wochenblatt* 1886, Nos. 40 and 41).

and the characteristic canon for the wind in the working-out section:

Towards the close, as Tappert tells us, there are daring harmonies foreign to the stricter school, "but what a wealth of talent in the youthful sketch, what sureness of expression!"

The Allegro is followed by an *Adagio cantabile*:

in the course of which Tappert draws attention to an energetic eight-bar period strongly reminiscent of Beethoven. But the Adagio breaks off at the 29th bar. Why? Why, in fact, did the whole work proceed no farther than this its interrupted sketch? The answer may be found in the preceding chapter: after the conception of *Das Liebesverbot*, our wonder should rather be directed to the young master's having taken up for the moment with a purely symphonic creation. We can only attribute it to a sort of survival from a stage of development already overpassed; for his whole present impulse was urging him in the direction struck by the sketch of his new opera. "I gave up my model, Beethoven; his Last Symphony I deemed the keystone of a whole great epoch of art, beyond which none could hope to press, and within whose limits none could reach to independence" (*P.W.* I., 9-10).

It was autumn, the beginning of October, when the Bethmann troupe made its entry into the prosperous city of merchants and manufacturers, with its fortress, barracks and redoubts. Upon its only broad, but scarcely straight street, the Breiter Weg or "Broadway," stood the Magdeburg Town-theatre, in friendly vicinity to Richter's wine-shades, the company's favourite resort before and after each rehearsal. Immediately opposite the theatre there embouches one of the numerous minor side-streets, the Margarethengasse: here Wagner made his first abode. It was in the corner-house No. 2, close beside the Korte brewery, the windows of his apartments looking on the Broadway. Afterwards he removed to the fourth floor of J. G. Knevel's house, No. 34 Breiter Weg, where he dwelt from 1835 to 1836.

He soon became at home in his new post of conductor: the quality of life behind the wings and before the footlights exactly suited his present mood. "My path led first to absolute frivolity in my views of art. The rehearsing and conducting of those loose-limbed French operas which then were the mode, the piquant prurience of their orchestral effects, gave me many a childish thrill of joy as I set the stew a-frothing right and left from my desk. In life, which henceforth definitely meant for me the life of the stage, I sought distraction; which took the form, as regards the things within my daily grasp, of a chase of pleasure—as regards music, of a prickling, sputtering unrest" (*P. W.* I., 297).

However, he took his present duties seriously enough, and, notwithstanding his youth, soon succeeded in inspiring both singers and bandsmen with respect. He knew exactly what he wanted, and had the knack of conveying it to the executants. With a mere mechanical beating of time he would have nothing to do, either now or at any time; upon every detail he bestowed the greatest pains, and constantly would sing a passage to the orchestra to shew how he wished it rendered. The same with the performers: possessed of natural histrionic talent, he would demonstrate by tone and gesture precisely his idea of any situation. Moreover by his lively temperament and ready wit, his thought for others and astounding memory, he soon endeared himself to all the company, down to the scene-shifters. The dislike he had cherished in earlier years for "the rouge-and-powdered ways of the comedian" had passed away: his irrepres-

sible humour would often set the green-room ringing with peals of laughter; but even in the freest and most familiar intercourse his fine tact prevented any of his associates from forgetting his position, and he remained the monarch of them all.

The public of Magdeburg was a more difficult nut to crack. Phlegmatic by nature, it had made it a question of etiquette to copy the coldness and indifference of one of its leading contingents. The place was a garrison-town; the military considered outbursts of enthusiasm the worst of 'form'; a like impassiveness had spread to the remainder of the audience. Among the civic population, on the other hand—at least at the time we are speaking of,—there prevailed a decided love of purely physical pleasures, most detrimental to the interests of the theatre: besides the countless dinners, soirées, balls, thé-dansants etc., with which society regaled itself throughout the winter, there was a whole network of similar reunions behind closed doors, at the Harmonie, Casino, Friendship Club, and whatever else they styled themselves; to say nothing of two Freemasons' lodges, a smaller called "Harpocrates," and a larger, perhaps the largest in all Germany, by the singular name of "Ferdinand to Felicity." The concerts given in the halls of these lodges enjoyed a certain reputation; but the chief point whereby they gained the favour of the public, was the splendid supper with which they always terminated. Wagner writes a most amusing letter hereanent to Schumann,* affording a characteristic glimpse of social life at Magdeburg in those days:—

"I assure you, they give us quite good music sometimes at these concerts; that the Magdeburgers don't even perceive it, is the curse that seems hurled at every bow-stroke or vocal note condemned to here. The indifferentism of the natives is altogether criminal, and in my opinion should be seen to by the police, for it is becoming an actual danger to the State. I wager, dreadful political machinations lurk behind this callousness, and it would be a real service to draw the attention of the supreme

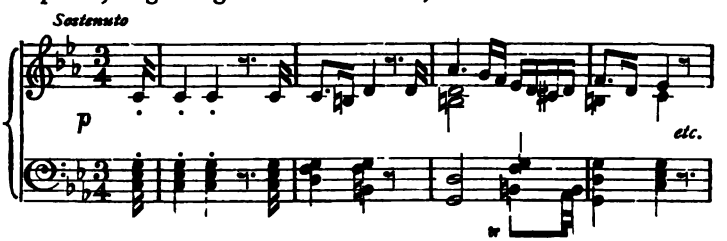
* In the first month of his Magdeburg stay he had sent to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, at Schumann's request, that article "Pasticcio" referred to on page 178. It will be found in volume eight of the *Prose Works*. In the *Bayreuther Blätter* for Nov. 1884 and February 1885 Herr Glasenapp deals with the relation between this article and Wagner's treatise of sixteen years later on "Opera and Drama."—W. A. E.

authorities to all the close societies, Casinos and so on; for what good thing can they be hatching?—But these people hide the true nefarious objects of their meetings from the eye of the uninitiate with marvellous success. Think of it! they open each of these seditious assemblies with a concert. Isn't that the refinement of deceit? They lure good citizens, like myself, to their concert. I enter a lighted room; everything is arranged in the ordinary fashion; folk play symphonies, concertos, overtures, sing arias and duets, and thus confirm one in the innocent belief it really is an honest concert. But the indifference, boredom, unrest of the audience can't escape a political instinct; one plainly sees the whole is but a mask to cheat the eye of the inquisitive;—the nearer the concert approaches its end, the more wistfully are the looks of the conspirators directed toward a big locked door. What does it mean? During the symphony's Adagio one catches the rattle of plates close by. The unrest increases;—fortunately the orchestra now creates a terrible uproar; it seems devised to drown the conspirators' shuffling of feet, their coughs and sneezes, and thus divert our notice from those secret signals. The concert is over,—all rise; honest people, like myself, pick up their hats, —then that suspicious door is opened, tell-tale odours stream forth,—the confederates close up their ranks,—they pour into the inner room,—I am politely waved off,—the hypocrisy is clear to me.—Let anyone deny that there is something very wrong concealed here. For my part, I am surprised at the remissness of the police."

At one of these Lodge-concerts he had his overture to *Die Feen* performed; it was received with much applause. But things were not going so well with the fate of the work itself at Leipzig; merely deferred at first, the production was put off from time to time under every nugatory pretext. Objection was taken to the opera's being "composed throughout"; a portion of the dialogue must be transposed into spoken prose. After that, Ringelhardt declared the book ruined by the prose. Hauser revealed himself to brother-in-law Friedrich Brockhaus as an open and most obstinate antagonist: it would be better, according to him, if the composer decided to withdraw the work entirely for the present, but at least it was an imperative necessity to get up Auber's *Philtre* first, for Michaelmas. In October the solo parts were copied out at last; Wagner was to

come over from Magdeburg for the trial of several extracts in presence of the director. Then again, this project was declared infeasible: it would be injurious to a first impression, if the singers were to read their parts like that at sight; they must be given time to study them, and perhaps the opera might yet come out this side of Christmas. As late as the end of the year, Schumann printed an encouraging note in the *Neue Zeitschrift*: "At Leipzig we are about to have Bellini's *Norma* and a new opera, *Die Feen*, by Richard Wagner." The announcement was all that it came to; *Norma* indeed got performed, but not Richard Wagner's new opera. It had clearly been shelved. Meantime the composition of *Das Liebesverbot* was begun, and its totally different character weaned the musician himself more and more from his earlier work. He lost all interest in its fate, and as he no longer was able to push his affair at Leipzig in person, he determined to trouble no further about it. That meant as much as abandoning it completely, for only by dint of continual dunning could he have hoped to gain his end.

About Christmas he hastily threw off some music for a festival text by Regisseur Wilhelm Schmale. It was a New Year's cantata for the opening of 1835, adapted to local means and conditions, and consisting of an overture and two choruses. The overture in C minor, triple time, is a fairly long and powerful piece; beginning *Andante sostenuto*,



it passes into *Allegro* and a boisterous *Presto*. In an *Allegretto* with chorus, following on the overture, use is made of that *Andante* theme from the Symphony in C as a melodramatic accompaniment to the mournful leave-taking of the expiring year. The whole thing was very well received by the public.—Easy successes like this confirmed him in the opinion that, to please, one must not be over-scrupulous in one's choice of means: "So

I went on with the composition of my *Liebesverbot*, and took no care whatever to shut off echoes from the French and Italian stage."

Such were the outward stimuli and general artistic influences at work on him just now. In any town of 40,000 inhabitants, in which he might have wielded the conductor's baton at the theatre, they would have been pretty much the same; and it was less on his artistic, than his personal career, that his Magdeburg surroundings had a permanent effect. Since his entry on his new vocation he had been charmed by one acquaintance in particular, that of the leading juvenile actress in the Magdeburg company, Wilhelmine Planer, born in Dresden and "as pretty as a picture." Till now his closer knowledge of the female sex—apart from his purely artistic adoration of the Schröder-Devrient—had been confined to the immediate circle of his family, his mother and sisters; anything else was but a fleeting pastime. Even his art-creations reveal it: Arindal loves a *fairy*, a supernatural being, an ideal that lifts him up above himself, as his art the yearning artist; the first really human female in his works, the Isabella of *Das Liebesverbot*, is not so much his own as Shakespeare's, and sister, not beloved, of the nominal hero. With the opening of this new chapter in his life we are reminded of his words in *Opera and Drama*: "In the family the natural ties become ties of wont; and from wont, again, is evolved a natural inclination of the children toward each other. But the earliest breath of conjugal love is brought the stripling by an unaccustomed object, confronting him entire from life outside. This attraction is so overpowering, that it draws him from the wonted family-surroundings, where exactly this had never presented itself, and drives him forth to fare with the unwonted" (*P. W.* II., 181-2). The "unwonted object," in this case, was in undoubted possession of many winning qualities; all contemporary accounts extol her beauty, histrionic talent, and unassuming amiability. Her attractiveness would be enhanced by the contrast of her quiet, unimpassioned nature with the motley theatrical crew in which their first encounter happened, and amid which they were thrown into almost daily contact by professional duties. The liking once conceived, advanced with the same rapidity as every other feeling in Wagner's strenuous breast: in less than half a year from their first meeting, the pair were openly avowed betrothed.

Without going farther into this personal relation, for the

present, we will return to Wagner's artistic activity during his Magdeburg period. The composition of the *Liebesverbot* was going on, subject to temporary interruption by occasional efforts such as that New Year's music. Chief among these was the overture to a play of his friend Theodor Apel's, performed at Magdeburg and called *Columbus*; subsequently played in Leipzig, Riga and Paris, this overture may be regarded in some sort as the forerunner of that to the *Flying Dutchman*. "At the close of the Middle Ages a new impulse led the nations forth to voyage of discovery. The sea in turn became the soil of life; no longer the narrow land-locked sea of the Hellenic world, but the ocean that engirdles all the earth. Goodbye to the old world; the longing of Ulysses, back to home and hearth and wedded wife, had mounted to the longing for a new, an unknown country, invisible as yet, but dimly boded" (*P. W.* I., 307). These words will convey the idea of the piece; its realisation is thus described by Dorn, after a hearing at Riga: "The conception and construction of this overture one can only call true Beethovenian: grand thoughts, bold cut of rhythm, the melody less predominant, the working-out broad and intentionally massive,—on the other hand, the externals modern of the modern, wellnigh Bellinian; I simply tell the naked truth, when I state that in the *Columbus* two valved trumpets are kept in constant motion, their united parts covering fourteen and a half close-written pages."

Among these occasional pieces we even hear of the music for a fairy-farce; though none of it has come down to us. No less an authority than Edward Dannreuther makes mention of it in the "Orchestral and Choral" section of the "Chronological Lists" appended to his admirable essay on Richard Wagner, in Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, as follows: "Incidental music —songs—to a 'Zauberposse' by Gleich, 'Der Berggeist, oder Die drei Wünsche.' Magdeburg, 1836. (Unpublished, MS. probably lost.)" A tradition, revived in the *Oberfränkische Zeitung*, goes still farther, mixing up the names of Wagner, his fiancée and others, in what is evidently intended to be a humorous story—concerning the irritation of the company at Bethmann's getting up this silly farce, their purloining its original music from the lodgings of the tenor to whose keeping it had been entrusted, and Wagner's coming to the rescue of both parties with a hasty composition of his own. But on the first of January 1877 the

master sends a letter to the editor of that journal, in which he protests in most emphatic terms against the "mendacious introduction" of his name and that of Minna Planer. He does not, however, contradict in *detail*; so that it is possible that he really wrote some incidental music for this *Berggeist*—though the date assigned by Mr Dannreuther would have to be altered from "1836" to 1835, the tenor in question having left Magdeburg in the summer of the year last-named.

One of the most faithful and devoted friends of the Magdeburg conductor was his "companion and consoler in all the troubles of his cabined life there," his good dog Rüpel. At first it insisted on following him into the orchestra; after its banishment thence, for too acutely critical remarks, it would take a jaunt round the town and wait in patience for its master at the stage-door. F. Avenarius tells us that Rüpel was always to be seen at Wagner's heels when he went courting in blue swallow-tails and spotless ducks, and once made an unexpected appearance in public. Wagner had been conducting the entr'acte music of a play, and sat drinking a glass of beer at the buffet: at this moment an evil-doer makes his exit, leaving a highly moral character upon the stage; on the "boards that represent the world" there suddenly arrives no less a personage than Rüpel, in search of its master; despairing calls are heard from the wings—"Rrrr" the only answer. The actor pauses—shall he proceed? He decides to ignore the intruder; pointing to the exit by which the stage-villain has just gone out, he resumes, "He's just as shifty as his master." Unfortunately, Rüpel now stands on the very spot, to the hysterical delight of the audience. At last the conductor himself arrives behind the scenes, coaxes his dog off, and peace is restored.—"Perhaps it was this selfsame animal that accompanied him on a trip to Saxon Switzerland, and wanted to follow the adventurous climber up the precipitous heights of the Bastei: fearing lest it should come by a fall, Wagner throws his handkerchief down for the hound to guard; after a brief conflict between divided duties, the sagacious creature buries the handkerchief at the foot of the crag, and swarms the summit to his master. This was a favourite anecdote from the 'History of my Dogs'" (Wolzogen, *Richard Wagner und die Thierwelt*, p. 17).

The season was over; attended by his faithful hound, Wagner

returned to Leipzig until it should reopen. An accountable pride withheld him from any fresh attempt to save his immolated *Feen*. Not that it would have been at all likely to succeed; for even in the concert affairs of his birthplace a great change had supervened. At the Gewandhaus "the days of homeliness had come to end," since Felix Mendelssohn had stepped into the shoes of kindly Pohlenz. At the beginning of October 1834, just as Wagner was leaving Rudolstadt to take up his new position at Magdeburg, Mendelssohn had made a few days' halt in Leipzig on his road from Berlin to Düsseldorf, putting up at Regisseur Hauser's, the manuscript-collector and enemy of *Die Feen*, and taking stock of the Gewandhaus orchestra at a rehearsal under Conzertmeister Matthäi. Though he had merely been a listener, it was enough to draw attention to him; negotiations were commenced, to fix his rising star to Leipzig. Half a year later, on the 16th April 1835, Pohlenz—whose merits and personality commanded universal sympathy—received his dismissal "in consequence of differences with the committee, the origin of which cannot be stated in a manner equally exonerative of both parties." *

Shortly before his dismissal, Pohlenz gave a performance of Wagner's *Columbus* overture at one of the last Gewandhaus concerts he ever conducted; in the previous season (1834) he had been obliging enough to introduce the *Feen* overture to the Leipzig public. With Mendelssohn's advent began the era of these concerts' "lustre"; after a few months the general adoration of the new conductor amounted to a veritable cult. "Astounded at the ability of this still young master," says Wagner of him, "I approached and handed him, or rather pressed on him, the manuscript score of my Symphony in C, with the request—not even to look at it, but just to keep it

* This is how Dr E. Kneschke expresses it in his *Geschichte der Gewandhausconzerte*. He informs us, however, that Mendelssohn had previously insisted on a definite assurance that no one would be set aside or injured through his assuming the post. On the 9th of March 1843 a festival-concert was given in celebration of the centenary of these concerts, conducted by Mendelssohn and followed by a banquet, to which Pohlenz came by invitation. "He returned home in apparent health; but perhaps the recollections and excitement of that evening had a direct connection with the stroke of apoplexy from which Pohlenz expired on the morning of the 10th" (Kneschke, p. 63).

by him. Of course I hoped he would peep into it nevertheless, and some day say a word to me about it. But that some-day never came. In course of years our several paths brought us often in contact; we met, ate, and even music-ed together once in Leipzig . . . only about my symphony and its manuscript never a word fell from his lips: reason enough for me never to ask about its fate" (*P. W.* VI., 317).

From Leipzig Wagner made an excursion to Bad-Kösen near Naumburg, for the purpose of meeting friend Laube. In this little hamlet, with its fresh air and country life as yet unspoilt, the author of "Young Europe" was recovering from many a heavy blow incurred since their last companionship. His literary activity had been a thorn in the side of Prussia, which stretched its tentacles as far as Saxony; and when he repaired to Berlin to defend himself, the notorious sleuth-hound Herr von Tzschoppe had just come by the happy thought that his quarry was a former member of the Halle "Burschenschaft." Nine months of detention had told on the nerves of the once saucy champion of the Dawning Century, and robbed him of all strength of mind and body, till at last he was deported to Kösen under oath to come up for judgment when called upon. Here Wagner visited him on the Heerweg at pastrycook Hammerling's, where Laube had taken lodgings and was writing novelettes to earn the keep of the mare on whose back he took his daily constitutional. Their past experiences and future plans were discussed at length, and the diction of the *Liebesverbot* found unstinted favour in the eyes of Laube.

The same summer our dramatist undertook a journey of inspection, to secure fresh singers for the Magdeburg management, touching at Nuremberg about the middle of August. Here he unexpectedly lit on Frau Schröder-Devrient, doing a brief "Gastspiel" on her way from Bad-Kissingen. The company at the little Nuremberg theatre allowed of no great choice of pieces; beyond *Fidelio* there was nothing feasible save J. Weigl's *Schweizerfamilie*. The artist complained that "Emmeline" was one of her earliest juvenile rôles, and she had played it till she was sick to death of it; Wagner also had fears of the performance, for he naturally imagined that this washy opera with its antiquated sentimentalism would weaken the impression hitherto made by Frau Devrient on the public alike with himself. To his intense

surprise, it was this evening that first revealed to him the overwhelming grandeur of the woman: "That a thing like the impersonation of this Switzer maid cannot be turned into a monument for all futurity!" he exclaims nearly forty years later (*P. W.* V., 223). Through the charm of her embodiment the great artist not only raised the insignificant character of Emmeline to the level of her noblest art, but taught the youthful master that "that art cannot be held too high and holy." He had not anticipated this new light on his fleeting visit to the old Mastersingers' city, and harder than ever did he estimate the task of the dramatic tone-poet who would maintain his work on a level with this marvellous impersonatrix.

Passing through Leipzig on his return-journey, he learnt the news of the decease of his uncle Adolf, who had breathed his last at the country-seat of his friend Count Hohenthal, the generous patron of Seume. Here on the 1st of August 1835 a gentle death sealed those eyes which not so long ago had rested on the lad of fifteen whose thirst for knowledge drew him to the recluse in the midst of his books, to learn about Shakespeare and Dante, Sophocles and Calderon. Did their glance search through him then? Again it rested on him when the lad had grown into a youth, and, weathering the first wild turbulence of student life, began to shew himself a staid composer of overtures and symphonies, as if in pursuance of the uncle's counsel to his elder brother Albert: "Think not that freedom is a wanton snatching at the lures outspread by the outer world! Nay, 'tis the abiding and continuance in, or at least the speedy return in childlike obedience to the Father-house from which we had played truant, the lively memory of that Love which conceived and cherished us from aye. Lay this to your heart; for it well may prove the music to be studied first, that will set exhaustless harmonies sounding in us. Then, and not till then, should you apply yourself with diligence to that other music, which is but an echo of this." But the symphonist, in whom lay hid the future dramatist, went over to the "opera"; and to the uncle it was but the common "theatre," that "stall of Thalia" in which he had seen the children of his brother's house "penned" one by one. So those eyes which had dwelt with wellnigh marvel on the questioning boy, and thereafter on the passionate youth, the rising young musician, had been turned more seldom toward the Wurzburg chorus-master. And

now they were closed forever, at the very time the Magdeburg conductor was devoting heart and soul to that "theatre"—not without inner doubts of its moral and artistic qualities, but momentarily stifling all such doubts.

When Richard got back to Magdeburg, he found a good opera-company assembled, chiefly through his own exertions. If the season ended in disaster, it certainly was no fault of the conductor or performers, but of the public's rooted callousness. Thus in the Dresden *Abendzeitung* of Feb. 24 and 26, 1836, we have a report from Magdeburg: "Hitherto but little had been heard of our theatre, and that little not particularly edifying; for, despite all efforts of the management, it was impossible to get a good ensemble together on the stage. It is all the more refreshing to be able to report that this winter has presented our theatre-goers with an admirable combination, especially in *opera*. We have three sopranos, all good of their kind: Dlle. Schindler, an old friend of ours; Dlle. Limbach from Frankfort-on-Main, with a fresh and agreeable little voice; and Mme. Pollert, a native of S. Petersburg, never heard before, so far as we are aware, on any German stage. The lady last-named is possessed of high volubility, purity of intonation, and great dramatic power; as Rosina in the *Barbiere*, Julia in *Montechi e Capuleti*, Jessonda, the Dame blanche, and above all Elise in *Lestocq*, she has earned vociferous applause. . . . Our only fear is lest we should lose her; for, notwithstanding the affluence of our city, the theatre is poorly patronised, preference being unfortunately given to more material pleasures such as suppers, balls, card-parties etc., etc. The opera is also well served by our two tenors, Herr Freimüller, the owner of a rich and pleasing voice, and Herr Schreiber, still quite young, but of the fairest promise. Then we have the barytone Krug, very good, and the bass Gräfe, who, if not too amply endowed by nature, yet displays great musical knowledge and dramatic insight. The recited Play is not at all bad; its ranks are distinguished by the pair of Grabowski's, Dlle. Planer ["Minna"], a very pretty young lady who is not above taking pains to improve, and Herr Pollert, husband of the singer aforesaid."

We have also a brief unsigned account sent by Wagner to Schumann's *Zeitschrift* at the close of the season, in which he does not scruple to speak of himself in the third person. He

begins with a remark about those lodge-concerts, "at which a well-balanced orchestra under a conductor full of fire and nuptial bliss" makes excellent music from time to time, unheeded by the public. Then he turns to the theatre: "What more could you want, when I assure you that we had such an Opera this winter as never before? What do you say to everybody here acknowledging it—and staying away? What do you say to this Opera being unable to support itself, and having to be disbanded before the end of the winter half-year? What do you say to it, dear Sir? Joking apart, it's enough to anger anyone. Effort, chance and fortune, had collected such an admirable operatic ensemble here as could not possibly be bettered. I should like to see, for instance, a theatre that could cast the soprano parts in *Lestocq* so easily as we were able to, with the Pollert, the Limbach and the Schindler—Elisabeth, Katharina and Eudoxia. We had a capital first tenor, Freimüller, a second with a charming youthful chest-voice, Schreiber, and a good basso Krug, who likewise schooled our choristers quite splendidly. When I add that a young but dexterous artist, like the musical director Richard Wagner, put all his skill and spirit into the obtaining of a good effect, you may imagine that we could not fail of getting true artistic treats. Among these I may instance the representations of new operas such as *Jessonda*, *Norma*, and *Lestocq*." . . .

The work last named, the latest-born of Auber's muse, had first seen the footlights at the Paris Opéra Comique only the year before. Owing to its points of kinship with *Masaniello*, Wagner had bestowed peculiar care on its Magdeburg production, and done his best to emphasise whatever in it might recall the spirit of that opera; by a draft of soldier singers from the garrison he had reinforced the Russian battalion, which appears on the scene in support of a revolution, to an extent that much alarmed the manager, but had a quite imposing effect. And yet the public's lethargy, with the consequent disorder in the theatre's finances, put a damper upon everything. So the reporter to Schumann's paper, almost discarding his mask, continues as follows: "By Herr Wagner, and the likes of him and myself, I see what a torture it is to feel life tingling in every vein, and be condemned to dwell in this city of trade and war. Here is nothing but a highly decent dalliance, not even amounting to deliberate retrogression; for that at least would be a movement, and one might

thus have the prospect of returning to the state of nature, which would be passably agreeable as a change!—But no, *things stand.*"

Under these conditions there could be nothing more timely for the young artist than to resume the composition of his *Liebesverbot*, laid aside for some time, and finish it as rapidly as feasible in the thick of his winter duties. Premature dissolution was an instant peril, and there could be no thought of carrying on the enterprise of worthy Bethmann under a different form. On the other hand, Wagner confidently anticipated that the production of his opera by the excellent company still at his disposal would prove a turning-point in his fortunes—much needed, as the payment of salaries had long been a thing of the past.

To refund the expenses of his business trip last summer he had been promised a benefit-performance. Naturally he chose his own last work for it, and did his best to make the cost as light as possible. But as the management was obliged to make certain disbursements for the mounting, it was agreed that the receipts of the first performance should go to *it*, of the second to himself. Indeed, he might rely upon a substantial profit; for here was a brand-new opera, instinct with life and fire, yet well within the ordinary means. That its rehearsal and production were postponed to quite the end of the season, did not strike him as a disadvantage; for all the public's apathy, the singers had frequently roused it to some show of interest; and what with his own popularity, and this being their *last* appearance, he might reckon on a bumper house.

Unfortunately the legitimate close of the season, fixed for the end of April 1836, never came at all. Owing to arrears of wages, the principal members of the opera-company announced their departure in March, to take more lucrative engagements; tenor Freimüller had booked for Leipzig, Frau Pollert for the Königstädter theatre in Berlin; the directorate had no remedy. So things looked black; the chance of producing his opera seemed more than doubtful. It was solely through the great esteem he enjoyed with all the company that the singers were induced, not only to stay on till the end of March, but also to go through the drudgery of getting up at brief notice a work on whose score the composer had scarcely set the finishing touch. If time was to be allowed for two performances, there were but ten days for the

rehearsals; and that for no simple singspiel, but a grand opera with many lengthy ensemble-numbers.

However, vocal and orchestral parts were copied out, and studied night and morning. The rooms on the ground-floor of the theatre giving on to the Breiter Weg, then used for soloist and chorus practice, were occupied each day, and the young composer was up to his ears in rehearsing. Nevertheless it was inevitable that the obliging singers hardly knew half of their parts by heart, and he had to reckon on a miracle to be worked by his conductor's-wand. At the one or two full rehearsals he managed to keep the thing afloat by continual prompting, singing aloud, and pantomimic interjections; so that it really seemed it would not turn out much amiss. "Alas! we had forgotten that on the night itself, in presence of the public, all these drastic means of oiling the wheels would have to shrink to the beat of my baton and the dumb motion of my face" (*P. W.* VII., 10).

And there were other obstacles to overcome. The police took fright at the suggestive title, "Love Forbidden," which, if the author had not agreed to change it, would in itself have shattered all his hopes. It was Passion Week, when merry, not to say "improper" pieces were tabooed from the theatre. Luckily the magistrate with whom he had to deal was a gentleman who had not duly qualified for the post of Reader of Plays, and when Wagner assured him that his plot was founded on a highly serious play of Shakespeare's, he contented himself with accepting the proposed alteration to "The Novice of Palermo," which really sounded quite ecclesiastic. The case was worse for the spectators: a book would have very much helped them to follow the story; but the management couldn't afford any more printing.

So the day of production arrived, Tuesday the 29th of March 1836. A night-rehearsal of the orchestra had preceded it, to which the bandsmen had been inveigled by the prospect of a solid supper,—good Magdeburgers! The house filled remarkably well, but the singers, especially the males, were so uncertain of their parts that a general mystification prevailed from beginning to end. The first tenor, blest with the flimsiest memory in the world, endeavoured to trick out the rôle of Luzio with reminiscences of *Fra Diavolo* and *Zampa*, and more by token with a nodding plume of many-coloured feathers. With exception

of a few applauded numbers for the lady singers, the whole brisk and energetic action "remained a musical shadow-play on the stage, which the orchestra did its best to drown in inexplicable torrents." The performance was a nightmare to all concerned; the dialogue being sung throughout, not a soul could catch a word of it; yet whatever went the least bit well, was valiantly cheered.

Perfectly aware that his work had made no real impression, and that nobody had the remotest idea what it all was about, Wagner nevertheless counted on good, nay, grand receipts from the *second* performance — his Benefit and the positively last appearance of the company; so that nothing could dissuade him from standing out for so-called "full prices." But an evil star seemed to reign over the work. A quarter of an hour before curtain-rise a quarrel broke out between the husband of the prima donna, "Isabella," and the second tenor, "Claudio," a regular Adonis. The jealous husband thought the hour had come for squaring accounts with the gallant of his wife: poor Claudio was so knocked about that he had to retire to the vestiary with a bleeding face. Isabella got wind of it, rushed upon her raging husband, and herself received such blows that she straightway went into hysterics. Sides were taken for and against; in a few minutes the whole company was engaged in generally paying off old debts. Whatever the upshot may have been, thus much was certain: the pair of sufferers from Isabella's husband's love-forbiddal were rendered quite incapable of coming on that night. The stage-manager was sent before the curtain, to inform the singularly select company in front that "on account of unexpected obstacles" there would be no performance.

A battle royal between the singers who were to have repeated his first-presented opera—that was the last impression Wagner bore away from his earliest conductorship at a German theatre. From a material point of view, moreover, nothing could have been more unfortunate than the collapse of his benefit-performance. If at this his entry on a self-supporting career it were a question of gaining experience, not merely of his art, but of life in general, he might apply to himself with terrible conviction that line of Goethe's, "Experience consists in one's experiencing what one has no wish to."

IV.

ROSALIE WAGNER.

External straits.—Leipzig: attempts to get "Das Liebesverbot" accepted.—Solicitude of sister Rosalie.—Her temporary eclipse as actress.—Rosalie's marriage with Oswald Marbach: birth of a daughter, and the mother's death.

> *If the Artist's temperament is a peculiarly inflammable one, he has to pay for it through being the only real sufferer thereby; whereas the cold-blooded can always find the wool to warm him.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

A SPELL of care and privations now lay before the youthful master. Immediately after the brawl at the theatre the exponents of his *Liebesverbot*, already straining at the leash, dispersed in all directions. Director Bethmann renewed his infelicitous experiments at Stralsund, next at Rostock; "Luzio" Freimüller went to Leipzig, Frau Pollert and Frl. Limbach to the Königstadt theatre in Berlin, and so forth. Behind stayed none but Wagner's local creditors, and none too few of them. His earliest taste of manly independence had led him into many a folly; "the seriousness of life announced itself," short commons and debts on every hand. On the 11th of April, exactly ten days after the frustration of his last hopes of Magdeburg, a marriage took place at the church of S. Nicholas in Dresden—that of his sister Ottilie to the brilliant Sanscrit scholar Dr Hermann Brockhaus, younger brother of the publisher, who had settled down in comfortable private circumstances after a long absence in Copenhagen, Paris, London and Oxford. Wagner was not at the wedding, but in solitude at distant Magdeburg, passing through a bitter time of fruitless struggle, too proud to ask the help of more prosperous connections, yet with no immediate prospect either of employment elsewhere or of a repetition of his new opera.

Looking back in after life (1851), he says that the solitary performance of *Das Liebesverbot*, "pursued with headstrong obstinacy under the most adverse conditions," caused him much momentary vexation, yet the experience was quite unequal to cure him of the *levity* with which he then regarded everything. No other person is entitled to endorse so harsh a verdict. Without the dash of "levity," with which he may have had to reproach himself down to that date, he would not have been precisely *Wagner*. On the other hand, if we consider the various factors in his outward situation,—the extraordinary haphazardness of the Magdeburg management, the non-payment of salaries, and final bankruptcy of the theatre,—it is difficult to say what other, better thing he could have done in the circumstances, than what he actually did. For the present there was nothing for it, but to set his teeth, and prepare in seclusion for a turn of the tide. To these endeavours belongs the report to Schumann's journal already cited, written April 19, 1836. At its close he speaks of the "hurried and scamped" performance of his opera, though he naturally refers to the work itself with great reserve: "I cannot conceive what could have moved the composer to bring out a work like this at Magdeburg. For that matter, I regret my inability to express myself at length about it,—what is a single performance, and that not even a clear and intelligible one? Of this much I am sure, however: the work will succeed, if the composer has the luck to get it given at good places. There's a good deal in it; and what pleased me, was the ring of the thing; it is all music and melody, which we have to make some search for in our German Opera nowadays."

In the interest of this work he next returned to Leipzig for awhile: where else than in the city of his birth, where his first-fruits had been welcomed with encouraging applause, might he count on a production of this opera? The work itself displayed so little prudery towards the prevailing Franco-Italian craze, that he well might hope to edge it in, instead of the abandoned *Feen*. Once more he opened negotiations with Ringelhardt. Unfortunately that wily speculator had just reaped a very bad experience with the mounting of a new romantic opera by Marschner, *Die Feuerbraut, oder: das Schloss am Ætna* (text by Klingemann): too visible use had been made in it of every known expedient to create effect; applause had been half-hearted, and the opera vanished from the repertory after a very few per-

formances. To coax the director's interest in his latest work, Wagner suggested his daughter, a débutante at the Leipzig Opera, for the part of Marianne. It did not help him, for the "heavy father" of Iffland and Kotzebue pieces took refuge in the colourable plea that, quite apart from other difficulties in the way of any operatic novelty for the moment, he had a strong objection to the young-European tendence of the subject, and "even if the Leipzig magistrates were to permit the representation—which his respect for those authorities made him very much doubt—as a conscientious parent he could not possibly allow his daughter to appear in it." This categorical display of an acutely moral sense cut off the only hope that could have buoyed the author in his desperate situation. With artistic comrades such as Schumann and Carl Banck—the latter of whom had been introduced to him at Magdeburg, and expressed himself very favourably about the music of *Das Liebesverbot*—he came into but passing contact in the present call at Leipzig; access to the Gewandhaus concerts was, and remained, denied him: there was little to detain him in a natal town that seemed so changed.

In his family circle, after his mother, none took so keen an interest in his fate as his darling sister Rosalie. If in a sense we may compare the Wagner of this period with his Tannhäuser, impetuous and all aglow, Rosalie's unwavering faith in him, when all had given him up, may be likened to that of *his* Elisabeth. Features of her character have been transferred by him to the pure and lofty figure of Isabella; in after years the mother would speak of her as "angel Rosalie," "my sainted Rosalie"; and when the outer and inner distance between him and his increased, it was her responsive heart that felt true sorrows of Elisabeth. It was *she* who had lately put forth all her strength to move the Director and Kapellmeister to produce *Die Feen*, and taken on herself in Richard's name to foil their every subterfuge. That opera's varying prospects stand recorded in the shower of letters with which she kept him posted at Magdeburg, several of which, on natty gilt-edged green paper, were treasured piously by Richard, and form a precious hoard at Wahnfried; letters in which she informs her brother how "in spite of rain and storm she had just come from Stegmayer," or what new excuses that sly fox Ringelhardt had manufactured for his broken promise. But she would not have been the refined and noble creature that she was, had she

possessed an atom of that wheedling talent for intrigue which alone could have secured a victory. On the contrary, it must have been a great grief to her that, at the very time when her personal influence might have aided her brother's cause, her own renown as actress was temporarily eclipsed by pushing rivals.

The period of three years, to which we allude, begins precisely with the advent of the Ringelhardt dictatorship, and is sufficiently reflected in public references to her acting. Even in an earlier report on her interpretation of the dumb rôle in Auber's *Masaniello* we find intrusion of the unctuous wish: "We are a little curious to see Fenella played for once by a passionate brunette, more in keeping with the fiery south-Italian character" (*Abendzeitung*, Feb. 1830). With the beginning of the actual Ringelhardt régime, in August 1832, the "brunette" principle obeyed the invocation in shape of a truly oriental beauty, a Dem. Reimann, who particularly bewitched the Leipzigers as Juliet. At first it was merely: "We cannot gainsay her talent and a certain routine, but she still stands very much in need of art and finish" (*ibid.* Aug. 1832). Then barely six months later the balance turns distinctly in her favour: "Among the ladies of the company we must give first place to Dem. Reimann, a young, intelligent and delightful actress, who several times already has worked incomparably as 'leading juvenile.' The third rank is taken by Dem. Rosalie Wagner: in tragedy this lady has but *one* rôle in which she merits unstinted praise and cordial admiration of her powers of conception and portrayal—the rôle of Gretchen in *Faust*. Her rivalry with Dem. R.—we are thinking, among other things, of the *Stumme von Portici*—has not had the happiest result for herself" (*ibid.* April 1833). And again a year after, August 1834: "Dem. Wagner, in frequent conflict with Dem. R., is often in a disagreeable plight; and it appears as if the nimbus wrested by her fortunate rival not seldom puts her in the shade in the eyes of the public. Nevertheless she has her due share of approval, and will continue to enjoy it so long as the rendering of Gretchen in Goethe's *Faust* finds just recognition." Not until after the departure of the dangerous "brunette"—now Mme. Dessoir (? Dessauer), engaged in 1835 at Breslau—do we find our Rosalie described once more as the undisputed "first and only prop of comedy" (*ibid.* Feb. 1835).—These extracts not only will shew the machinations with which the earnest artist had then to contend, but also form a

characteristic page in the history of the German Theatre: the opening paragraph of that chapter with the grandiloquent motto "*Ab oriente lux*," whose peroration is not yet,—the commencement of the Judaic dynasty.

After what has been said of Rosalie Wagner on previous occasions, it will be readily believed that so finely-tempered a nature would suffer under unmerited slights, but never could be moved to bitterness or anger. Her mother writes: "She had no wish to seem to be more than she was." She was the last person in the world to be blind to her own shortcomings; conscious, often grievously so, of the bounds to her artistic powers, she always strove most sedulously for improvement. The grace of her pliant figure and her maiden tenderness of touch, without a tinge of coquetry or affectation, won the hearts of all spectators; her voice had many an affecting accent, and she succeeded the most surely where she put it to the smallest strain. Traces of mannerism would creep in, according to the evidence before us, when too pronounced an effort had been made; in passionate parts she would let herself be betrayed into a certain restlessness: but, more than any study, it was her truly feminine personality that lent its unity and roundness to each of her embodiments; and that personality shed no less a charm on the creations of her art, than on her actual relationships as daughter, sister—and wife.

When Richard quitted Leipzig again in the summer of 1836, to seek relief in any distant corner from the utter hopelessness at home, she bade him a solicitous goodbye. Never again was he to see his sister, and it was amid fresh hardships in that distance that he learnt the harrowing tidings of her death. Soon after that goodbye she became the bride of a young and talented writer, Dr Gotthard Oswald Marbach, who had been practising for the last three years as tutor of philosophy and physics at the University of Leipzig, and won universal esteem through his thorough-going energy and many-sided culture. On the 24th October, 1836, Rosalie Wagner gave him her hand in the selfsame parish-church at Schönefeld where her grandfather had been married years ago.

It was a wrench to the mother, to be deprived of this daughter who had dwelt the longest with her, and to whom she clove with an almost reverential love; but she had the consolation of know-

ing her appreciated by her husband, and herself always welcome in her children's house. "They were quite wrapped up in one another and their quiet home; its ordering was pretty, clean and neat, but unpretentious; so that all who went to visit them were gratified and glad," she herself says in a letter preserved at Wahnfried, "and so I had this daughter yet, saw her, and saw her in the arms of a respected husband." In a story written shortly after Rosalie's death ("Der Pietist," *Jahreszeiten*, Leipzig 1839) Marbach depicts the course and sudden termination of their wedded happiness, under the fictitious names of "Bettina and S." An abridgement of that narrative may serve better than any description of our own :—

"Bettina was the most delightful hostess; her husband, familiar with the literature of every cultured nation, supplied her quick intuitive brain with ample food. Even the excitability common to both their natures appeared to heighten the charm of their companionship. Experience of life had given her a gentleness that promptly quelled each momentary wave of annoyance. It was wonderful, how swiftly she would reconsider any view of hers if S. gainsaid it: in such cases she would mollify him with a tender word, and then proceed to think the whole thing out in silence, until she burst forth with a joyful 'See, I have it now. Now I understand it!' And then she would back up his own opinion, but recently at variance with hers, with reasons often better than he could have advanced for it himself. Is it a matter for surprise, that S. should have almost deified a wife like that?—'All the pleasures of my childhood have come back to me,' he often cried, 'but we're living, too, like children. Can you imagine it? I cannot fall asleep, if I don't feel her hand in mine. No earthly joy, no transport of passion, could surpass the blessed peace that takes me when I gaze in this pure being's eye.'—

"Winter slips by, without the happy couple ever finding it too long. In spring Bettina feels the presage of a mother's hope. One balmy evening they are strolling arm-in-arm beneath the cherry-blossoms of their garden: 'She seemed engaged in gloomy thought, and when I asked her anxiously the reason, she gave a blushing answer.' She is tortured with the fear that the life of her child will be her death; she listens mutely to his words of cheer, but cannot force the tears back. 'Ah!' she sighs, 'were

I but granted one year more, to taste my happiness!' Her husband almost harshly checks the thought implied; she smiles, but speaks not, then turns towards the house. When he comes into the parlour she runs to meet him with an eerie laugh: 'Look! I've been working out a problem, whether 'twere best for you that I remain alive, or not; and as it turns out that you need me very much, I believe God's justice won't allow us to be severed yet.' Sobbing she sank on his breast, but from the beatific smile upon her face one could see that her tears were of joy."—So far Marbach, in whose *Buch der Liebe* we find a whole series of sonnets devoted to the memory of his wife.

At Wahnfried there exists a letter in which the mother relates a conversation held with Rosalie about the absent brother, when her daughter had bewailed that sister Louise placed too little confidence in his gifts and future. In fact there was then a little rift between Wagner and his brother-in-law Friedrich Brockhaus, cutting off the last hope of supplies from home to the struggling artist. How to lend a helping hand, how to reconcile the two, assuredly preoccupied full many of her leisure hours. Meanwhile the autumn of 1837 approached, setting an ever greater outward space between her and her brother (who had just gone off to Riga), and drawing fine the thread of her own life. On the 7th of October she gave birth to a daughter, Margarethe Johanna Rosalie; five days later—Thursday the 12th—that thread of life was snapped.

No other source being open to us, we will draw our account of her end from Marbach's tale, so obviously based on reality. "She had left her bed a few days after her confinement; S. himself and the doctor had persuaded her to do so, as she appeared to be quite well. There were many little things to alter in the arrangement of the rooms, owing to the arrival of the tiny stranger; these changes she herself conducted, with an activity wellnigh preternatural in view of her condition: she suddenly fell ill, and—died that day."

V.

KÖNIGSBERG.

Berlin disappointments.—Königsberg.—Letter to Dorn.—Draft of "Die hohe Braut" despatched to Scribe for Paris.—Marriage with Minna Planer.—"Rule Britannia" overture.—Concerts in the crush-room.—Incidental music to a play.—Relations with A. Lewald.—Dresden: Bulwer's "Rienzi."

> *The modern requital of modern levity soon rapped at my door. I fell in love; married in headstrong haste; tortured myself ana other with the discomforts of a poverty-stricken home; and thus fell into that misery whose nature it is to bring thousands upon thousands to the ground.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

WAGNER had gone to Berlin in the middle of May 1836 without the smallest certain prospect. He had nothing to expect from the Court-opera, under Spontini's control; but he knew that several members of the disbanded Magdeburg company were now employed at the smaller Königstädter theatre. He therefore placed himself in communication with the director of the latter, Cerf by name, and offered him the *Liebesverbot*. Fortune, indeed, at last seemed smiling on him; he was received with open arms, and felt in clover for the present. His three-and-twentieth birthday, passed in solitude, was gilded with the glitter of false hopes. A few days later he writes to Schumann (May 28), "I shall remain here for a month or two, and, by arrangement with Cerf, as soon as Gläser takes his holiday I am to undertake his duties [of conductor] at the Königstädter house. During my locum-tenensship I shall produce my opera." He apologises for having left Leipzig without saying adieu: "I was in a trivial state, and wished to spare you a trivial farewell."*

* While in Berlin he also sent Schumann a contribution for the *Neue Zeitschrift*—in which it did not appear, however—signed with the pseudonym

His sojourn in the Prussian capital, with its "philosophic pietism,"* its scribbling diplomats à la Varnhagen, and its babbling art-critics à la Ludwig Rellstab—about whom he remarks to Schumann, "You would scarcely believe the harm this man is doing here"—could offer him but little of attractive. His sole reward was the hearing of a performance of *Ferdinand Cortez* under Spontini's own baton, when he was specially impressed by the almost military precision of the supers' evolutions: the wand of the exacting maestro had here become a marshal's staff, a ruler's sceptre. In 1860 he refers to this particular performance as one of those that had given him an insight into "the quite unparalleled effect of certain dramatico-musical combinations; an effect of such depth, such inwardness, and yet so direct a vividness, as no other art is able to produce" (*P. W.* III., 304).

As for his personal condition, he was penniless and simply ticking off the days to entry on the function promised him. After two months' waiting in vain, he had to repeat the sour experience that not one promise had been squarely meant. In the worst of circumstances, he put an end to his stay in Berlin.

It was no use going back to Leipzig; so he betook himself to Königsberg in Prussia, where the prospect of a musical conductorship had opened at the very moment of his grossest undeception in Berlin. His fiancée, Minna Planer, was engaged at Königsberg as actress; this was the magnet that drew him to the ultimate North-East of Germany. In that Magdeburg New Year's festival, for which he had employed the Andante theme of his Symphony in expression alike of the old year's leave-taking and his own farewell to his young ideals, it was her prepossessing figure that clad the *new* year on the stage; to him she seemed marked out by fate to form the "new

"Wilhelm Drach," an anagram of "-chard." This pseudonym is of interest, since the master used it again, three-and-thirty years later, for his article on *Eduard Devrient and his Style* (1869). Other of his pseudonyms, "Canto Spianato," "W. Freudenfeuer" and "H. Valentino," we meet in course of the present volume; whilst *Judaism in Music* originally appeared above the signature "Karl Freigedank" (1850).

* "What time the whole of Germany lays bare its heart to the musical gospel according to Felix Mendelssohn, this ardour has been catered for in Berlin by philosophic pietism" (*P. W.* VII., 143—written in 1841).

year" of his private calendar. As there were no enterprising theatrical agencies in those days, it was *she* who had acquainted him with the approaching vacancy at Königsberg,—what more natural, than that he should obey her call? The inhospitable aspect of his birthplace had forced him from the circle of his family; in any case he saw himself consigned to a foreign port: in this East-Prussian Residenz he might hope not only for an appointment, but also for the satisfaction of a pressing need.

At the beginning of August he arrived in the natal city of E. T. A. Hoffmann, where Friedrich I. had crowned himself first King of Prussia, but still more famous as the whilom residence of Kant. Unfortunately he soon discovered that the hoped-for vacancy would not come off just yet. Hübsch, himself a capital young actor, was then director of the Königsberg theatre; its musical conductor was Louis Schuberth, engaged in a similar capacity before at Riga, whither he was to have returned this autumn. It was upon this that Minna had counted, when she induced her fiancé to leave Berlin. But, as Wagner writes to Dorn on August 7, "Schuberth no longer seems to have the slightest inclination to depart; God knows what chains him—but here he stops." In a footnote to this letter Dorn tells us what the "chain" was: an interesting affair with a no less interesting first-singer at the Königsberg theatre, Henriette Grosser,—"a star of the first magnitude, invaluable to Opera," as the *Allg. mus. Ztg.* of that year expresses it, but unluckily too prone to twinkling with her feet, for "it is said that this very young lady is fonder of dancing than of scales and exercises, with frequent hoarseness as a consequence." It was all very pleasant for Schuberth; but this sudden change in his intentions had a dire effect on the prospects which had tempted Wagner to the remotest nook of Germany. Having drawn so near to the Russian frontier, it therefore struck him that, as his colleague could not possibly lay claim to *both* appointments, he might as well apply for that which Schuberth seemed to have abandoned, and aim at Riga if only he could get his bride engaged there too. From "Prussian Siberia" he bent his glance still farther toward the Northern East, knowing that his old Leipzig friend and "patron" Heinrich Dorn had been a resident in the Lithuanian capital for several years.

After the disestablishment of the Leipzig Court-theatre, Dorn

had made his way through Hamburg to Riga, where he at first found occupation at the Opera; since then, as Town Cantor and Conductor, he had been sending Schumann's *Zeitschrift* roseate accounts from time to time of musical festivities—among others, of the first general Music-Festival of the Russian Baltic Provinces, got up by himself in June. Recalling Dorn's previous courtesy, Wagner resolved to beg his friendly offices, in the first place to supply him with more intimate particulars of the state of things at Riga. "For the last two years," his letter says, "I—*ci-devant* dreamer and Beethovenite—have entered a practical career, and you'd be fairly astounded at the radical transformation of my extremist views on music. Now fate and love have bundled me to Königsberg, where I fancied I had solid hopes of an engagement; and the only reason for their probable destruction is that I had deceived myself when I believed Herr Sch. would return to Riga this autumn." He accordingly inquires if there is a passable theatre, including opera, even at this time of year in Riga, and whether it would be advisable and to one's credit to take a post there. "My betrothed, Fräulein Planer, at present engaged here as first juvenile lady, in that case would follow me, as she has already had offers from that quarter, which she naturally would not accept unless I were engaged there too. How delighted I should be, to be able to present her to yourself and your estimable wife, and commend us as a youthful couple to your kindness." Toward the end of the letter he says, "There are certain relations in life which always remain the same. So I certainly shall never arrive at another position towards yourself, than that of ward and protégé to you my guardian and protector. That is obvious enough to me from this first resumption since so long." And so it might have continued, at least for awhile, as Dorn had the advantage of seniority; but unhappily events soon proved that Wagner was willing enough to maintain the relationship, but Dorn was not the man for it.

He had asked for an answer to be sent poste-restante to the little town of Memel on the Kurisches Haff. Before the opening of their regular "season," the Königsberg company had a series of comedy and opera performances to give at this out-of-the-way extremity of Eastern Prussia; they went there the second week of August, Wagner with them, and returned the middle of September. Dorn's answer duly arrived; its report on Riga was

not encouraging: stage matters there were rather in a fix just then; the Riga theatre was on the point of complete suspension, until it could be placed on a firmer basis by a substantial sum to be subscribed by local tradesmen. So our hero had to fall back on his dubious prospects at Königsberg. It was a time of want and deprivation, without one break in the clouds.

However, no matter what the outer pressure, nothing could rob him of his ingrained elasticity: if the screw was relaxed but an instant, he came up smiling once again. Only, his creative impulse suffered sorely; this enforced leisure was not of that agreeable kind which allows a man to muster all his forces for a major task. Yet his restless brain was full of projects, and he set about attempting to start connections far and wide. With his sense of strength and faculty, what binding reason was there for his dooming himself to moulder away in small provincial German theatres? Was there not a larger, freer world outside? "One strong desire arose in me, and grew into an all-consuming passion: to force my way out from the paltry squalor of my situation. This desire, however, was busied only in the second line with Life; its front rank made towards a brilliant course as Artist. To vault the petty circuit of the German stage, and straightway try my luck in Paris,—this, in the end, was the goal I set before me" (*P. W.* I., 297). The glamour of Paris, the only actual sovereign of dramatic music and literature, the pattern which the largest German theatres all toiled to copy with the utmost cost and slavish exactitude in every possible detail of scenery, machinery and costume,—at the present stage of his development it exercised on him the greatest power of attraction. The tempting thought sprang up in him, to throw off the incubus at one thrust, break through the fetters of this cramping German hole-and-cornerism, and make a dash for the arena of bold artistic triumphs.

Always abreast of contemporary literature, about this time he fell in with Heinrich König's recent novel *Die hohe Braut.* "All that I read had but one interest for me, namely its adaptability for an opera: in the mood I then was in, that reading conjured up before my eyes the vision of a grand five-act opera for Paris" (*ibid.*). He drafted a full sketch at once, complete in every point save versification; and off it went "in passable French translation" to SCRIBE the world-renowned librettist of the *Huguenots*—

which had taken Paris by storm that selfsame year,* and already run through forty representations to the comforting tune of three-hundred thousand francs. In a letter of enclosure he proposed that Scribe, if the subject pleased him, should undergo the trifling pains of versifying it, or otherwise, as he deemed best: "In that case"—as he writes to August Lewald two years later—"I would have composed the opera, and left him to bring it out in Paris under *his* authority and with *his* name as poet. The profits to accrue from the affair, so far as he wished to avail himself of them, I naturally should have placed at his disposal; the least a nameless German composer could do in the circumstances." To make sure of the sketch and letter reaching their destination, he sent both to his brother-in-law Friedrich Brockhaus, who had continual business relations with Paris, for further expedition.

Meanwhile the wretched state of his finances could not prevent his taking the fatal plunge into matrimony. On the 24th of November 1836, in the Tragheimer Church at Königsberg, Wilhelm Richard Wagner married Christine Wilhelmine Planer, one year his junior, third daughter of a Dresden "mechanicus" Gotthilf Planer. According to the present incumbent, Minister von Behr, the entry in the register was made by Minister Johann Friedrich Hapsel (?), who thus would appear to have officiated at the ceremony. This entry states that the *sponsus* was born on the 22nd of May 1813, and has a mother still living in Dresden; the *sponsa* has the sanction of her parents, under date the 27th October, Dresden, witnessed by Orphanage-minister Meinert; whilst the banns published at Magdeburg Nov. 6 are also laid *ad acta*.

It is easy to understand the motives that influenced Richard Wagner not to postpone this critical event to at least a more propitious season. In the desolation of Königsberg, with his outlook on the world so dreary, he determined to compel, as it were, the domestic ease he needed for artistic productivity. But the link was now forged that bound his future to a helpmate with whom he had the smallest possible community of inner feeling. Beyond doubt, he brought her that genuine affection which survived the hardest trials it ever was put to; beyond doubt the pretty, young and popular actress meant well by the ardent young conductor when she joined her hand with his at a time of so little

* With Nourrit, Levasseur and Dlle. Falcon in the principal rôles.

outward prospect; beyond doubt, she expected much from his abilities. Merely, due in part to the great confusion of his circumstances, the picture she formed of his future had no higher light in it than an honourable appointment with good pay. What was stirring in Richard's breast, and in the sequel often caused him recklessly to break with outward profit in pursuit of higher ends, in hers met nothing but an irremediable and inconciliable misunderstanding. Any profounder sense of the enormous artistic significance of her husband never dawned upon her, either in this cloudy period or at a later date; and though she made him loving sacrifices, she neither had the blissful satisfaction of knowing to *whom* they were offered, nor of affording the struggling artist a sympathetic ear in which to pour his deeper woes. Wagner never forgot how she bore the trials of the next few changeful years without a murmur; nevertheless this precipitate marriage of two natures so immiscible dragged after it an almost endless chain of sorrows and internal conflicts.

The immediate result of settling down into a "poverty-stricken home" was a fight for bare existence; all higher aims were silenced for awhile. "The year I passed at Königsberg was completely lost to my art through the pettiest cares. I wrote one solitary overture: *Rule Britannia.*" This does not represent the whole of Wagner's energy, however, for he appears to have taken refuge in various literary and poetic drafts. Of the latter we have already mentioned *Die hohe Braut*; there was another, a comic pendant, reminding us of the twin birth of *Lohengrin* and *Die Meistersinger*,—namely the sketch for a *Bärenfamilie*, which we shall meet again at Riga. Of the minor literary works, several occasional notes have come down to us, among them a longish essay on *Dramatic Song*, which stands in close relationship to the article on *German Opera* and the *Pasticcio* of 1834. This essay, whose autograph is at present in the possession of an unknown collector, has been reproduced in the *Allg. Mus. Ztg.* of 1888 (page 98), beginning as under:—

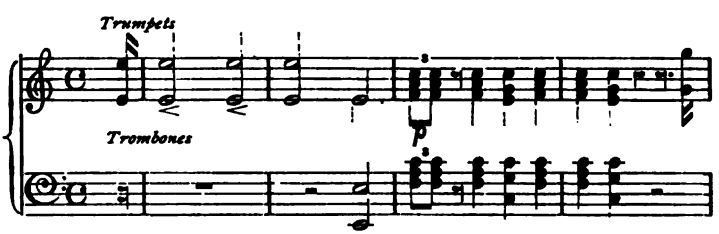
"So much nonsense is cackled by us Germans about singing, as in itself to prove how little the divine true gift of Song has been conferred on us in general. People always speak most of what they have not got; and, instead of learning to recognise our deficiency, we trot out our prattling philosophy to cheat us into passing off our ignorance for the only saving grace. But that's a

misfortune for us. Why will we Germans not realise that we haven't everything? Why don't we acknowledge freely and openly that the Italian in his song, the Frenchman in his lighter and livelier treatment of operatic music, have an advantage over the German? Can he not set against all this his deeper science, his more thorough cultivation, and especially his happy faculty of easily appropriating both advantages of the French and Italian, whereas they never will attain our own?—A fortunate constitution makes the Italian a born singer, and that not only in respect of a beautiful voice,—which *is* bestowed upon us Germans now and then,—but also of that natural flexibility and power of moderating into loud or low, which to us are total strangers. Now these are advantages we must first acquire, and, as so many examples inculcate, we also *can* acquire. That demands *study*, and in view of our national virtue of diligence and perseverance, it is astonishing and annoying to hear that such a study is unnecessary, that we ought to be able to do everything by sheer stress of *emotion*." Here we have the theme to be worked out. In its elaboration Schröder-Devrient is taken as example of the consequences of giving way to emotion in excess of the physical strength. In the days of her youth this great singer had come near to losing her voice entirely, through allowing emotion free rein. She was on the point of forsaking Opera, when she turned over a new leaf: at the Italian Opera in Paris she learnt the benefit of proper singing, made it her own, and in virtue thereof now stood at the height of her power. "Go witness her Fidelio, her Euryanthe, her Norma, her Romeo; you would think she must be tired to death after such a display,—and honestly, she herself declares that in earlier years exhaustion seized her every time, whereas she now could easily go through a part like these twice over in one evening," etc., etc.

Another Königsberg article is devoted to the first local performance of *Norma*. It covers three folio pages, embracing 169 long lines, and begins with the words: "Wednesday the 8th of March. For the first time: *Norma* by Bellini. In this opera Bellini has decidedly soared to the full height of his talent," etc. It is not clear on the face of it, why Wagner wrote at all about this incident; quite certainly it had nothing to do with a performance for his own benefit, as afterwards at Riga. Perhaps it was simply out of politeness, or in the general interest of the Königsberg theatre, which

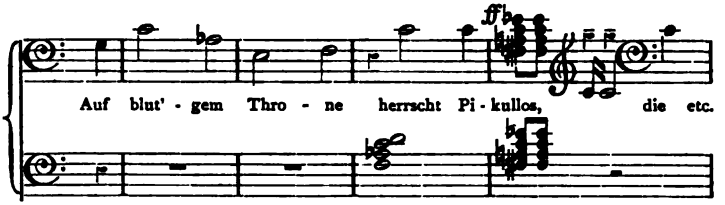
was so much affected by the indifference of the public that the very latest novelties of French and Italian Opera, Halévy's *Juive*, Bellini's *Puritani*, and this same *Norma*, passed across its stage unheeded.

To return to the practical side: to provide himself with means of sustenance, also to win the good-will of the Königsberg public, Wagner conducted orchestral concerts in the theatre's crush-room, at one of which his new overture *Rule Britannia* was played. "The simple decorations of the room," writes J. Feski—pseudonym for Sobolewski—"together with the dim half-light, lend the strains of these concerts quite a mysterious charm, which the uninitiated take for irregular progressions. Further, it is the only place where young composers can bring their new-fledged works at once to hearing without risk. Thus we have heard this year an overture by Servais, and one by Musikdirektor Wagner." The reporter says nothing of the work itself, but remarks on the rendering: "Herr Musikdirektor Wagner directed the whole with imposing dignity, and guarded against the fault with which Herr Theater-musikdirektor Schuberth is taxed, that of conducting with both arms, *by keeping one perpetually a-kimbo*" (*Neue Zeitschrift*, March 1837).

On the spare pages of a fragmentary sketch of this *Rule Britannia* overture there is a remarkable jotting of a wild scene of sacrificial incantation, evidently for some play performed at the time in Königsberg. Such a destination is proved by the 'cues' strewn here and there, and the names of old Prusso-Lithuanian deities invoked. It bears the superscription "*Marcia moderato*," and begins with a strongly rhythmic and trenchantly-instrumented Introduction of 24 bars:

The instrumental prelude closes with three mighty thuds on the big drum, followed by a like number of long-held notes for the trombones. Then the priests begin their chant:

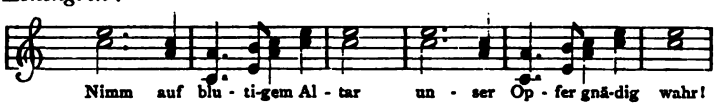
Hört der Götter Spruch! Fühlet ihren Fluch!
Auf blut'gem Throne herrscht Pikullos,
die Feuerkrone trägt Perkunos,
doch Glück zum Lohne schenkt Potrimpos.

The unison of the Priests is pointed by occasional chords for the brass:



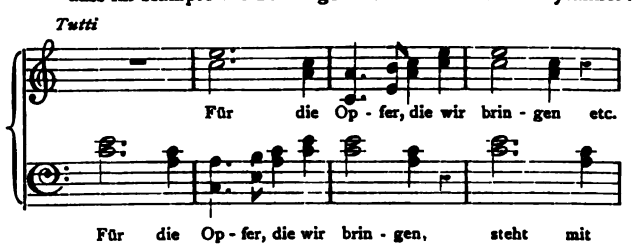
Then comes a "Chorus of Youths":

Perkunos! Perkunos! Nimm auf blutigem Altar unser Opfer gnädig wahr!
Leih' uns Deiner Schrecken Macht, stärke uns in wilder Schlacht!

The incantation-melody distinctly forebodes the sombre Ring-motive of the later world-tragedy, also the Question-forbiddal in *Lohengrin*:

A "Chorus of Virgins" takes up the same melodic phrase in F:

Potrimpos! Potrimpos! Nimm auf deinem Weihaltar unsers Opfers gnädig wahr!
Sende Deines Segens Macht, strahle Licht in unsre Nacht!

whereupon all the voices combine, in canon, for the sacrificial hymn:

Für die Opfer, die wir bringen, steht mit eurer Macht uns bei,
dass im Kampfe wir bezwingen Feindes Macht und Tyrannei!

and after a dialogue, merely indicated by the 'cue,' we have a Chorus of Priests:

> Die Flamme sprüht, der Holzstoss glüht!
> Perkunos, Blutgott, gieb ein Zeichen,
> Wer dir als Opfer soll erbleichen!

Manifestly it is the sketch of a musical inset for a play representing the first struggles of Christianity with old-Prussian paganism and the bloody ritual of its human sacrifices, and the Druidic rites of *Norma* may have inspired Wagner with it. We are reminded of Werner's *Kreuz an der Ostsee*, with its three huge idols beneath the hoary oak of King Waidemuthis; but no further light has as yet been elicited from the imperfect records of theatrical doings at Königsberg.* The only thing certain, is that when Schuberth at last went away, in March or April 1837, Wagner stepped into his empty shoes, and had experience of another theatre threatened with bankruptcy through insufficient interest of the public. We have already seen that the *Juive*, *Puritani* and *Norma*, were impotent to rouse attention: the spoken Play "fared worse than ever, this winter . . . only Dem. Planer and Mme. Schmidt succeeding at times in fanning the chilly audience to a little flame" (A. Woltersdorf, "Geschichte des Königsberger Theaters v. 1744-1855," *Theatralisches*, Berlin 1856).

Considering the shaky condition of the Königsberg stage, it was all the more urgent for Wagner to pick up the strands already spun. Scribe, to whom he had sent the sketch of his *Hohe Braut*, had so far made no answer; but that did not deter the youthful author—it needed more than that, to cause him to abandon hope. With the idea of a Paris success firmly fixed in his brain, for awhile he entertained the notion of sending the score of his *Liebesverbot* direct to the entrepreneur of the Opéra Comique: the man was to get the music and text examined by "Auber and God knows whom"; if both were to his liking, would he kindly have French words fitted to the music by some Parisian playwright or other? However, he gave up that idea for Scribe. Having waited in vain through half a

* The melodic fragments reproduced above were first made public by W. Tappert in his article "Perkunos-Lohengrin" in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* of 1887, pp. 414-15. As to the three old divinities, see Henri Wissendorff's *Notes sur la Mythologie des Lataviens*, Paris 1893.

year for a reply, he wrote again to that potentate soon after entering on his conductorship at Königsberg. Taking on himself the blame for the other's silence, he said he could well imagine Scribe's perplexity in the absence of any clue to his correspondent's ability as composer. To repair that oversight, he accompanied his letter this time by the score of *Das Liebesverbot*, begging the Parisian to obtain the opinion of Auber and Meyerbeer upon it. In case that were favourable, he now offered him this opera also, on the same terms as the draft of the *Hohe Braut* before: he could easily have a rough translation made from the present text, and turn it into a Scribian operatic subject at his own good pleasure, then offer it to the Opéra Comique.— There also exists the draft of a letter to Meyerbeer of this same Königsberg period. Very possibly, Wagner addressed himself likewise to this man of influence, to woo that influence for his affair; possibly, on the other hand, it got no farther than the draft. In either case, it is folly to compare this letter to a perfect stranger with the writer's published utterances of later years; at that time he knew still less of the Prince of Opera, his ways and aims, or even his music, than of his own consuming fire.

But he did not confine himself to foreign schemes: from the solitude of his East-Prussian retreat he cast fond eyes on native central Germany. At that time August Lewald was editing that popular and widely-circulated quarterly, *Europa*, and its outward get-up was really something superior, with frequent art-supplements and so forth. Wagner introduced himself to him from Königsberg, and offered him the Carnival-song from his *Liebesverbot* as a musical garnish. He had the delight, not only of seeing his composition accepted and used according to desire, but also of finding his interests advocated in a kindlier manner than had happened to him for many a day. Lewald accompanied the publication with a remark that the "Carnevalslied by Herr Wagner, Musikdirektor in Königsberg i. Pr." was from an opera which the author had sent to Paris, to have it translated by Scribe into French and produced on the stage there. "He has made over to Herr Scribe," so Lewald continues, "all the author's-rights in the text; which is the main consideration, as otherwise intrigues of all kinds are to be expected from French authors who see their perquisites endangered by the inroad of foreigners.

As soon as I hear the result of the steps commenced by my young friend, I will communicate the same to the public." That was promising enough, for a mere statement of facts; but better was to come, a word of warm encouragement to the young dramatic musician at grips with the German stage-system: "If the state of things in Germany does not alter; if it is to continue to be almost harder for the talented composer to manœuvre his work on to the smallest local theatre in Germany, than into Paris itself; if the German stage-authorities are to go on frowning down the good and deserving that still crops up from here and there, whilst theatric criticism is left to the ignorant as a shameful trade,—the only way for young aspirants is to appeal to Abroad. I make this observation quite apart from the case in point, the result of which I cannot venture to forecast" (*Europa, Chronik der gebildeten Welt*, 1837, II. p. 240).

Meantime the inevitable collapse of the Königsberg theatre was fast approaching, on the one hand; on the other, "my household troubles increased," as Wagner remarks in his only hint of a doubly trying situation. As before at Magdeburg, the declared bankruptcy of the management put a sudden end to his brief term of conducting.

Among his Königsberg "art-colleagues" he had scarcely formed one friendship. In one of his letters he does make mention of the eventual composer of *Comala*, E. Sobolewski, as an accomplished pianist who was about to play him Schumann's Sonata in F sharp minor (op. 11), which had only just appeared. But that gentleman came neither then nor later to any serious understanding of the artistic personality and aims of Wagner, as is proved pretty plainly by some of his brochures published in the fifties.*

Presently we find Schumann's Königsberg correspondent, M. Hahnbüchn, reporting with regret that "Herr Musikdirektor

* *Oper, nicht Drama*, Bremen 1857; *Das Geheimniss der neuesten Schule der Musik*, Leipzig 1859, — the latter containing but little "mysterious." Eduard Sobolewski was an able conductor, composer, and pianoforte-teacher, but totally incapable of entering into that secret of all art which Wagner deals with in his *Letter on Liszt's Symphonic Poems*: "This secret is the essence of the Individuality and its way of looking at things, which would forever remain a mystery to us, did it not reveal itself in the gifted individual's artworks . . . and whoso would expatiate thereon, must have taken very little of it up, as one certainly can blab no secrets save those one has not understood." The

Wagner, who came in place of L. Schuberth, has already left us; for domestic reasons, it is said. He remained too short a time here, to be able to display his talent on many sides. His compositions, of which I have heard one overture and seen another, shew originality of productive power. . . . Many men are clear at once, alike in character and in their works; others have first to work their way through a chaos of passions. To be sure, the latter reach higher results."

In the early summer of 1837 Wagner set out, viâ Berlin, for Dresden.* There a reading of Bärmann's translation of Bulwer's "Rienzi" revived an idea he long had cherished, that of making the Last of the Tribunes the hero of a grand tragic opera. "My impatience of a degrading plight now mounted to a passionate craving to begin something grand and elevating, no matter if it involved the temporary abandonment of any practical goal. This mood was fed and strengthened by a reading of Bulwer's 'Rienzi.' From the misery of modern private life, whence I could no-how glean the scantiest material for artistic treatment, I was wafted by the image of a great historico-political event, in the enjoyment whereof I needs must find a distraction lifting me above cares and conditions that to me appeared nothing less than absolutely fatal to art" (*P. W.* I. 298). Those who can read between the lines, will recognise the value of thus being wafted from his private worries to a broader field; but something must also be allowed, as the master himself says, for the lyric element in his new hero's atmosphere, the Messengers of Peace, the Church's Call, the Battle-hymns, considering that his evolution had not yet passed the standpoint of purely musical Opera. "Objectionable outward relations," it is true, interfered with his engaging in any creative work for the moment; but the effect of the stimulus remained, though latent.

London *Musical World* of 1855 printed with malicious purpose a series of "Reactionary Letters," directed against Wagner and the supposed "new school," translated from Sobolewski's contemporary contributions to the *Ostpreussische Zeitung* of Königsberg.

* From a recently published letter (dated Dresden, June 12, 1837) to Louis Schindelmeisser—whom we may remember from the old Leipzig days,—it appears that Wagner was not accompanied by his newly-wedded wife, but stayed en garçon for a few weeks at Dresden with his sister Ottilie and her husband Hermann Brockhaus. Minna rejoined him at Riga in October.—W. A. E.

Among the contemporary performances at the Dresden Court-theatre there was one in particular that impressed him, that of Halévy's *Juive*, in German styled *Die Jüdin*. "A certain dread sublimity, transfigured by a breath of elegy, is a characteristic trait in Halévy's better, his heart-derived productions," he writes a few years later, and assigns the tragic power of the *book* as the reason why the composer's music here attains a height unscaled by him again.* The excellent manner in which Choir-director Wilhelm Fischer had trained the chorus evoked his highest admiration, and we find him referring to it in 1841, after he had heard the opera again in Paris, giving the Dresden chorus his preference over the Parisian.† He also saw a Warriors' dance in *Jessonda* performed in capital style by soldiers from the Dresden garrison, and cited it thereafter as model for the military dances in *Rienzi*.‡ It is a strange coincidence that this wellnigh accidental visit to his childhood's home should have had so much to do with the birth of an opera that was not to see the footlights until its author had returned there after five years spent beyond the frontiers of his native land.

In June, during this visit to Dresden, he received a circumstantial letter from Scribe, which would appear to have exonerated the famous librettist from any charge of former incivility: he had never received Wagner's first letter with the draft of *Die hohe Braut*, thanked him most politely for the score despatched, begged for preciser information as to his desires, and promised to do whatever lay in his power. That was something worth hearing, and the young master hastened to write him anew from Dresden, accompanying this third letter with a spare copy of the lost operatic draft. He committed both to the Dresden post, "for security's sake unfranked,"—and looked forward with no little elation to further developments.

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* I remember how, in the summer of 1878, the master suddenly stopped in the middle of a lively harangue on the peculiar merits of Halévy's music, to take the pianoforte-score of *La Juive* from his library-shelf and play a few extracts from it on the piano by way of illustration.—C. F. G.

† See Letters 1 and 3 to Fischer in the *Letters to Uhlig etc.*: "I keep coming back to *Die Jüdin*, for that is the only opera which I distinctly remember at Dresden. I saw it in the summer of 1837, and confess that I found the by no means inconsiderable ballet anything but bad, whether as regards arrangement or execution."

‡ *Ibidem*, p. 323.

VI.

RIGA.

First impressions. — Dorn, Löbmann, Karl von Holtei. — Wagner's endeavours to obtain good performances. — Amalie Planer.—National hymn "Nikolai."— Bellini's "Norma," and reflections thereon.—Removal to the suburbs.—Concert in the Schwartzhäupter Haus.—"Comedians' ways."—Longing to escape from narrow bounds.

> *Before I proceeded to carry out my plan of "Rienzi," much occurred in my outer life to distract me from my inner purpose.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

WAGNER's wish, expressed to Dorn a year ago, was now to be fulfilled in somewhat altered circumstances. Through Louis Schindelmeisser in Berlin, he entered into correspondence with Karl von Holtei, who was just forming a new stage-company for Riga. Holtei offered him the post of chief musical conductor, on terms to which we shall shortly return, and he made no delay in accepting it.

About the middle of August 1837, after a sea-voyage lasting several days, he sailed into the estuary of the Düna, or Dwina, along whose shore loomed high the towers of that ancient Hanseatic town to whose keen public spirit Herder once had owed the origin of his own peculiar views on Citizen and State.* Forty years afterwards Wagner still retained a vivid recollection of the aspect of the town as then he saw it, especially recalling the old floating-bridge across the Dwina. On one side of the bridge lay

* On a journey to Moscow in 1634 Paul Fleming had confessed to the German muses, in a sonnet dedicated to a "Herr Dr Hövel in Riga," his injustice in having theretofore confined their kingdom to the limits of the Rhine, the Danube and the Elbe, and not embraced the Dwina with its lovely city.

towering English merchantmen, a forest of gay pennants, with an undergrowth contributed by every Baltic port; on the other the Russian so-called *Strusen*, broad nondescript rafts of rough logs with primitive tents on them, laden with flax, corn and wood, slowly navigated to this Baltic mart from all parts of Lithuania, Poland and Russia: between the two the "factor." Nowhere had the soul of Commerce been set so vividly before him, as in this jostling of the opposites of East and West.

The first thing to which he had to accustom himself upon arrival in his new surroundings, was the dating of his life twelve whole days back; a doubtful loan, which the borrower had infallibly to refund on re-crossing the Russian frontier. In his *Parisian Amusements* he alludes to the bewilderment he had suffered from this Old-style calendar. By the Julian computation —in force in Russia to this day—he was only at the *beginning* of August, with nearly a month before the opening of the theatre on the first of September.

One portion of the Riga company had taken the journey with him; another he found already there; still other members trickled in during the next few days or weeks. His first calls were made on Director Holtei and his old acquaintance Dorn; his next on the worthy assistant-conductor, Franz Löbmann, who welcomed him with effusion and remained his faithful friend till death removed him in 1878. When signing the contract in Berlin, Holtei had prepared Wagner for the engagement of a deputy: upon Löbmann would devolve the rehearsing and conducting of minor operas and vaudevilles, which had hitherto fallen to the first violin; the salary paid this new creation was assigned by Holtei as reason for his inability to give Wagner any more than *eight-hundred* roubles a year instead of the regulation thousand of a Riga Kapellmeister. Of course it was all "in the higher interest of art," and the young master's scarcely swelling purse had to make the best of this reduction in so high a cause. He was used to it; those selfsame "interests of art" which to other servants of the Theatre become a pleasant source of private comfort, somehow always took the form with *him* of a deduction from wages, or similar sacrifice devised for him alone.

Never mind: in this instance he was secured not only a reliable assistant in the control of the orchestra for the whole duration of his stay in Riga, but also an amiable, sincerely attached, and un-

assuming friend. As in the sequel it supported him with every kind of practical service, Löbmann's ingrained obligingness came at once to the newcomer's rescue to discover him a decent lodging. The old Riga theatre, its interior just reconstructed and sumptuously adorned by the Society of Recreation, stood in what was formerly the Vietinghoff House in the Königsstrasse, and so continued until 1863; the theatre-bureau and box-office was at apothecary Kirchhoff's house, No. 139 in the narrow Schmiedestrasse. Between the two, only a few minutes' walk from the theatre, lay Wagner's first Riga abode, the Thau House—likewise in the Schmiedestrasse, but since pulled down—opposite the mouth of the Johanniskirchengasse. Gloomy and uninviting it was, looking on a courtyard long memorable to the master for its constant reek of schnaps and other ardent spirits.

His new Director is thus characterised by Wagner in after years: "Karl von Holtei sought the mimetic spirit in its native wilds, and shewed in that a spark of genius. He made no bones about confessing that he could do nothing with a 'solid' company, saying that since the theatre had been run in the grooves of social respectability it had lost its own true tendency, which he should soonest hope to restore, even yet, with a troop of strolling players. To this opinion the anything but witless man adhered." He never had one of the larger theatres to control, nor did he exercise any decisive influence on German dramatic art; a love of wandering drove him forth from town to town, from nook to nook, for the most part as reciter, and his brief tenure of the Riga theatre was itself the most important of his spells of management. Prior to this he had been secretary, playwright and regisseur to the Königsstädter theatre in Berlin, where he composed the most popular of his Liederspiele (a kind of Vaudeville), in which he played his own creations with undoubted originality,—since then, in fact, he played no others. He had been thinking of starting a theatre of his own in Berlin, expressly for the genre he practised, when he received the invitation to come to Riga and control the burghers' renovated house. At Easter of 1837 he had settled his contract with the theatre-committee on the spot, local magnates having voluntarily guaranteed the sum of fifteen-thousand roubles to insure the venture. The next few months were spent by Holtei in Berlin, as a centre for making the necessary engagements. Returning to Riga in the second half of July, he paved the way

for his season by ingratiating himself with the well-to-do inhabitants, who gathered every summer evening in Wöhrmann's Park, a fashionable public garden outside the ramparts. "Oh! I've brought some *ladies* of quite criminal beauty with me," he would whisper in allusion to the sisters Reithmeier; for the sly dog knew his hearers' weakness, and fancied that a better bait than high-faluting. For all that, he had not neglected weightier matters, and shewed such a striking talent for organisation that everything bade fair to start and go on well.

After Wagner's mournful experiences at Magdeburg and Königsberg, it was consoling to find his new employer intent on good performances at least. This was markedly the case with the spoken Play, which came out on the third evening with a representation of *King Lear* that set the whole town talking.* A similar success with the opening of the Opera was balked by the prima donna's breach of contract, which caused a grievous gap for some time to come. Holtei made public declaration: "Our operatic company is of full strength, and composed of individuals who would do credit to the largest stage; orchestra and chorus, under the best command, are equal to the very hardest tasks. Our fifth performance was to have been a grand opera; everything had been carefully prepared, and nothing but the unpardonable delay of Mme. Ernst, who puts me off from week to week with flattering promises, is accountable for our having to throw it over and suddenly take up with something else." Under these circumstances the operatic season was opened on Wednesday the first (13th) of September, at 6 o'clock, with K. Blum's one-act singspiel *Mary, Max und Michel*, conducted 'for this occasion only' by Richard Wagner. A report on this first performance says: "An eager throng filled the theatre betimes. The slender pillars of cast-iron gave the house an air of grace and lightness, while the bright-hued walls and balconies, the lavish gilding, ample illumination—in a word, the harmony of the whole, set the spectator at once in a good humour that even the Bengal heat could not disturb. . . ." For "Sergeant Max," the basso Günther, Wagner had

* The title-rôle was safe in the hands of that talented actor and stage-manager Alois Bosard, who on one occasion (Nov. 18, 1837), owing to indisposition of the actor cast for Karl Moor, played the parts of both the brothers Karl and Franz in Schiller's *Robbers* at a moment's notice, to the general satisfaction.

expressly composed a Romance in G, to words of Holtei's, "Sanfte Wehmuth will sich regen in des Mannes fester Brust"; alike at this performance, and at a repetition on Sunday the fifth, it was received with great applause.*

Touching this contretemps with the prima donna, there is a letter of Sept. 17, 1837, to Louis Schindelmeisser in which Wagner says: "What chance had I of writing you about our Opera before? We have only just got one: Norma had been prepared, and Madame Norma-Ernst never came.—What was to be done? Everything had to be turned topsy-turvy—all the stock operas presented difficulties—here parts were missing, there a couple hadn't yet been got up.—At last we opened Opera with the *Weisse Dame* [Dame Blanche]. Na! it went well—folk seem to have been even enraptured. Everyone was called." It was not till the middle of October, by which time the bravura lady had definitely renounced, that a temporary substitute was found in the person of Minna Wagner's younger sister, Liddy Amalie Planer, who arrived from Hanover. Her beautiful voice, elegant stage-presence and general utility, soon won her universal popularity; she remained in the Riga company for two whole years,—in fact until her marriage with Adjutant and Lieutenant of the Guards Carl Johann Gustav von Meck.† She undertook the prima donna parts awhile, making a very successful first appearance on October the 25th as "Romeo" in Bellini's *Montechi e Capuleti*; the tempi in which work, especially of the overture, are said to have been taken pretty fast by Wagner: "Brisk there; liven up; just a wee bit brisker!" were his pet apostrophes to the orchestra, and never failed of their effect.

Down to Amalie's arrival the repertory had been restricted to the *Dame Blanche*, *Freischütz* and *Zampa*. Now the conductor

* Embracing three closely-written folio pages, the manuscript of this Romance bears the date "Riga, 19 August" (i.e. August 31, 1837), consequently was composed a fortnight before the representation. For a time it remained in the master's possession, being mentioned as late as March 1855 in a letter to W. Fischer (*Letters to Uhlig*, &c.), where Wagner asks for it and other papers to be sent him to London; afterwards it fell into the maw of the autograph-hunter, where, so far as we can ascertain, it now is hopelessly submerged.

† See M. Rudolph's *Rigaer Theater- und Tonkünstlerlexikon*, s.v. "Amalie Planer." As to her first appearance here, see the "Dramaturgic Supplement" of the Riga *Zuschauer*, Nov. 1837.

could embark on something more ambitious, though struggling at first with many a drawback, particularly in the orchestra. In that letter of September last-quoted he says: "The gentlemen of the chorus were somewhat spoilt by too much acting comedy—for the rest, good voices. The orchestra will get on by-and-by—most of the new engagements are good, the old hands far less so. Horn-players splendid—wood ditto. Ensemble rather faulty; but will improve, I hope." The Riga orchestra then consisted of 22 to 24 bandsmen: two first and two second violins, who were willingly joined by Assistant-conductor (also Konzertmeister) Löbmann whenever Wagner thought needful, and could be increased to *six* in all if fortune favoured; two violas, one violoncello (v. Lutzau), one double bass; flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, two apiece; two horns, two trumpets, and a trombone whose attention was also paid to the bassoon. For grander operas, such as the *Stumme von Portici*, Siegert's military band was drawn upon; but only after a dispute with Holtei every time, and then the area was too small to hold it.

Holtei's horizon, to tell the truth, was bounded by easy Vaudeville and spoken Play, and almost jealously shut out the interests of Grand Opera; there accordingly arose full many a conflict, of which the public had no notion, but that often made the conductor's feeling of responsibility a bitter one. This may be traced in Holtei's own remarks about his association with Wagner: "He plagued my people with interminable rehearsals; nothing was right in his eyes, nothing good enough, nothing finely enough shaded. There was complaint after complaint; bandsmen and singers kept coming to me, to pour out their grievances. In my heart I could but side with Wagner, but I really was in no position to let him act just how he pleased,—he'd have positively killed my singers." Apart from obvious exaggeration, these utterances of the year 1858 most certainly take a different standpoint from that whence Holtei formerly opposed the just requirements of his Kapellmeister; the contumacy of fatuous heroes of the wings only too often found support in him against the lawful orders of their immediate chief. With one of these, the blacksmith tenor Köhler, owner of a fine voice but atrocious manners, the young master had gone through the part of Tybalt at the pianoforte and on the boards any number of times, only to find

him again ruining the performance of Bellini's opera on October 29 by false notes and shameful bawling. Immediately the act-drop had fallen, Wagner ascended the stage to read the incorrigible wretch a lecture, but was simply heaped with coarse abuse. He at once handed the baton to Löbmann, and conducted no more that night. Even that might have had no effect upon Director Holtei; but this time the company to a man took the part of their Kapellmeister, and after the next performance (Nov. 3) the Press itself seized the opportunity of recommending to the singer of Tybalt "better observance of the instructions of a mentor at once so versed in his art, so patient and kindly, as Musikdirektor Wagner."*

As regards his official work this autumn and winter of 1837, we may further note a most carefully rehearsed performance of *Don Giovanni* on November the fifth, with a special prologue by Holtei, to celebrate the jubilee of that masterpiece's first production at Prague. Don Juan was sung by barytone Albert Wrede, of handsome exterior and strong young voice, but scant musical ability and training; Leporello, by Karl Günther, a general favourite for his mellow bass, and especially admired in this buffo rôle and that of Figaro;† Donna Anna by Dem. Julie Reithmeier, and Donna Elvira by Amalie Planer. For the coronation-festival of Tsar Nicholas our musician composed a National Hymn to words by Harald v. Brackel, which was successfully repeated on ceremonial occasions such as the Imperial birth- or name-day, but vanished into limbo after Wagner's departure.‡ November 30 the *Stumme von Portici* was given for the benefit of Herr and Frau Köhler; whilst on Sunday the 11th of December fell "Herr Kapellmeister Wagner's benefit," for which he had chosen a first performance of Bellini's *Norma*.

On such occasions it was the custom to issue a *captatio benevolentiæ* emphasising, as will be understood, rather the merits than

* "Dramaturgische Blätter" by H. v. Brackel, a supplement to the Riga *Zuschauer*, Nov. 1837.

† Struck by his histrionic talent, Immermann had tried to persuade him, at Düsseldorf, to abandon Opera for the Play. In 1844 he met the master again, when starring at Dresden; once more in 1854, at Zurich; but died in Leipzig five years later.

‡ The text consists of four strophes, not without a certain lilt; it was reprinted, if we remember aright, in a Collection of von Brackel's poems (Riga, N. Kymmel, 1890). As to the score and parts of this "Volkslied,"

the defects of the work to be produced. On the playbill, or *Theater-Anzeige*, signed by Wagner we read: "Of all Bellini's creations NORMA is that which unites the richest flow of melody with the deepest glow of truth, and even the most determined opponents of the new Italian school of music do this composition the justice of admitting that, speaking to the heart, it shews an inner earnestness of aim." In an unsigned article in the Riga *Zuschauer* of December the 7th (19th) he goes into the subject more thoroughly, under the heading BELLINI: *a word in season.* Here, as in his every utterance of this period, he champions with all his own vivacity the broad melodic basis of Italian Opera: "Song, Song, and a third time Song, ye Germans! For Song is man's musical Speech; and if this language be not made and kept as self-dependent as every other cultured tongue, then nobody will understand you. The rest of the matter, what is bad in Bellini, any of your village school-masters could better; we admit it. To make merry over these defects, is quite beside the question: had Bellini taken lessons from a German school-master, he would probably have learnt to do better; but that he would have unlearnt his Song into the bargain, is much to be feared" (*P. W.* VIII., 68). In this sense he contrasts the proverbial "ear-tickling" of modern Italian music with the "eye-ache" engendered by so many a score of the later Germans: "As a matter of fact, the instantaneous apprehension of a whole dramatic passion is made far easier, when with all its subsidiary feelings and emotions that passion is brought by one firm stroke into *one* clear and telling melody, than when it is patched with a hundred tiny commentaries, with this and that harmonic nuance, the apostrophe of first one instrument and then the other, till at last it is doctored clean out of sight" (*ibid.*).*

How prophetic, to find the Riga Kapellmeister already dipping into problems which he afterwards set forth at length in *Opera*

every inquiry has proved in vain; though its *musical sketch*—plainly recognisable through the opening line, "Singt ein Lied dem edlen Kaiser, singt aus frohbewegter Brust"—appears on the fourth page of that addition to Blum's *Mary, Max und Michel* already mentioned. This fact we gather from an advertisement of the year 1886: since that momentary resurrection, however, nothing has been heard of the manuscript, not to say its restoration to the master's heirs.

* For a parallel, see the work of 1850, *Opera and Drama* (*P. W.* II.) pp. 84 and 312.

and Drama: the concentration of dramatic motives, and melody as the crucible for converting the poet's thought into a definite expression of feeling. We seem to have a foretaste of one of those mighty themes in his later works that sums up all "subsidiary feelings and emotions" as it wells from the very heart of the dramatic action; whilst the young man of four-and-twenty seems hovering on the brink of the discovery that the object of his search is the genuine *vocal* melody, unknown as yet, not that usurper fathered by the *instrument* or orchestra—and further, that this Melody must be no ready-made embellishment, but a vital *growth* from the artwork's organism, ere it can be a "clear and telling" one (*P. W.* II., 233). That certainty he had first to reap from his own experience, and experience of his own creations.

As to the dramatic treatment of a subject which is really a modification of *Medea*, Wagner here expresses an opinion—"the poem itself soars up to the height of the ancient Greeks"—in striking but unconscious harmony with that of Schopenhauer, who remarks about this *Norma* in his *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*: "Seldom does the truly tragic effect of a catastrophe, i.e. the resignation and spiritual elevation it produces in the heroes, attain so pure and lucid an expression as in the duet *Qual cor tradisti, qual cor perdesti*; where the reversal of the will is plainly pictured by the music's sudden calm. Taken all in all, quite apart from its music, and simply judged by its motives and inner economy, this piece is *a most perfect tragedy*, a veritable model of tragic type of motives, tragic progress of the plot, and tragical dénouement; with the consequent effect that the minds of the heroes, and through them those of the spectators, are lifted high above the world."

In any circumstances, whether for his own benefit or not, Wagner would have done his utmost to bring out the good points of a work. As to the opposite course he expresses himself more than thirty years later: "One has only to examine an orchestral part, of 'Norma' for instance, to discover what a curious changeling can come of such a harmless sheet of notes. The mere chain of transpositions, where an aria's adagio is played in F sharp, its allegro in F natural, and the bridge between them in E flat (for sake of the military brass), affords a truly horrifying picture of the music to which so many a respected Kapellmeister beats his time. . . . They think it too much trouble, to render

justice to so innocent a score; never dreaming that the least considerable opera, if unimpeachably presented, can make a relatively satisfying impression on the cultured mind" (*P. W.* IV., 352). To be sure, it was impossible to avoid *some* transpositions in this instance, as in the continued absence of a 'prima donna assoluta,' Amalie Planer had to personate the heroine of the piece, and much had to be lowered to the compass of her mezzo-soprano voice; moreover the advent of raw and wintry weather had brought on an attack of hoarseness, for which she was obliged to beg the public's indulgence. Nevertheless the work went well on this 11th (23rd) of December, not only owing to the precision of the ensemble, but also to the care with which the exponent of the title-rôle had been taken step by step along the footprints of great Schröder-Devrient. Next day was Christmas Eve according to the German calendar, and we may imagine how the little party of three in the young master's rooms was cheered by the welcome Christmas-box that arrived in the shape of yesterday's receipts, made over by the treasurer of the theatre.

Unfortunately the Kapellmeister's finances were sadly in need of such material aid, for they were suffering from the backwash of the terrible straits in which he had been forced to pass the last few years. Magdeburg and Königsberg creditors had soon got wind of this new 'northern latitude, and sufficient as the pittance of eight-hundred roubles dictated by the "interests of art" at Riga might prove to meet his current needs, it would go but a very little way toward paying off old debts. In this connection it is necessary to raise an emphatic protest against Dorn's slanderous assertion that "Wagner's load of debts grew to an avalanche in Riga, in part *through his wife's love of pleasure.*" On the contrary, her talent for household economy, her art of converting the most unpromising material into a comfortable and decent home, of making something out of nothing, and a little go a good long way, are the most universally allowed and undisputed of her domestic virtues.*

* In the sequel we shall see what interest Dorn had in representing Wagner's position at Riga as fundamentally *untenable*, and therefore not sparing even Minna. His statement in these "reminiscences," that Wagner received a salary of 1000 roubles, is also incorrect; it was Dorn himself who obtained that emolument immediately after Wagner's departure—when he had stepped into the other's shoes at Riga, without any extra duties.

Apropos of himself and Wagner at Riga, with a marked accent on self, Dorn has the following: "Our relations soon developed into intimacy. The disproportion between us at Leipzig—*I* a married man of office and standing, *he* a young student nine years my junior—naturally vanished now he himself had entered the state of matrimony and taken up a position at the theatre as recognised as my own in the church and school; whilst the disparity between the ages of 18 and 27, among men, is essentially different from that between 25 and 34. Add to this, that our wives consorted well together, and thus an old acquaintance ripened into a new friendship." In the Leipzig days Wagner had "introduced him to his mother's house," and in this renewed companionship he, Dorn, again had found him a "lively, merry fellow, up to every kind of fun, and always to the fore with a humorous story or bit of mimicry of all sorts of persons." In that letter to Schindelmeisser of Sept. 17/29, 1837, Wagner himself says, "Dorn is an agreeable, excellent creature, and behaves as true friend to me on all occasions. He is my only companion and friend." And though Dorn's attitude soon changed so utterly, in after years the master would tell of their old intimacy in their respective homes, as also at that much-frequented meeting-place, the "Ressource" on the Schwarzhäupter Platz—not the "Musse" (or Recreation Club), the exclusive preserve of the well-to-do classes. At the Ressource they "played whist and ate Düna salmon"; at Dorn's lodgings in the Sodoffsky House, and at Holtei's own apartments, many a pleasant social afternoon or night was passed.

Twenty years thereafter von Holtei avers that he already looked on Wagner as a man of mark, and in particular as a coming poet; when the musician entertained him with long accounts of his dramatic drafts, he (Holtei) had advised him to "write tragedies, and give up composition." On another occasion he is reported to have said to J. Lang, "I believe Wagner learnt harmony solely for the purpose of setting his own poems to music." Combining both remarks, we arrive at that jealousy of the professional scribe against the man whose inner impulse forced itself a vent in words and tones alike. It was always, "Write tragedies, and give up composition," or "Write music, and leave the text to us." If he would but stick to one or other path, his contemporaries would be content to acknowledge his talent; but both at once —was a little too much for the mental equilibrium of either poets

or musicians. Between Dorn with his dubious patronage on the one hand, and Holtei with his preference for "dissolute strolling-players" on the other, such was Wagner's position just now at Riga. With Holtei as librettist there was every likelihood of a local success, as earlier at Leipzig with Laube's *Kossiusko*; but what was a Riga success as vaudeville-composer to *him*?

In the new year 1838 Holtei took the whole burden of the Riga theatre on his own shoulders, the hitherto-responsible Committee having dissolved. This promised to set the establishment on a firmer basis than before, but the feelings of its Kapellmeister had already undergone a change. It was just about this time that there began that inner process which was inevitably to end by removing him from the primrose path of the modern stage. Inclined as he had been to look indulgently on the lack of depth in many a French and Italian score at the commencement of his career as conductor, ere long their intrinsic emptiness annoyed him. "The daily rehearsing of Auber's, Adam's and Bellini's music contributed its share to the swift extinction of my frivolous delight" (*P. W.* I. 12). At the same time the life of the "comedian" stood nakeder before him every day, with its tittle-tattle and claptrap, its rivalry for the public's favour, and the absolutely threadbare culture of a genus for the most part trained to the development of one single faculty. The mere *tone* it needed, but too frequently, to protect oneself against impertinences! Wit and humour, persuasion and eloquence, were insufficient weapons for this business: a good strong dose of domineering was required. In the mood in which he took up his new engagement, he had early conceived the notion of writing a work of lighter order expressly for the forces under his command. With this end in view he set out the text of a two-act comic opera, *Die glückliche Bärenfamilie*—"The happy Bears"—its subject borrowed from the *Thousand and one Nights*, though completely modernised. Two numbers had actually been composed, when he was seized with disgust at the thought of trimming his work to fit that "crew"; his inner sense was insulted by the discovery that he was on the high road to making music *à la* Adam himself; so he left the composition where it was.*

* In his article already cited, Mr Dannreuther says: "L. Nohl found the MS. at Riga in 1872, together with sketches for bits of the music—'à la Adam.' These are quoted in the *Neue Zeitschrift* (1884, p. 244)."

At the beginning of February 1838 the violinist Ole Bull gave four concerts in the theatre, and paid Wagner a visit in his apartments; an echo of which will be found in the latter's Paris Correspondence of 1841, in the form of a prayer that the Northern Paganini may not emulate H. Vieuxtemps by coming to his bedside and playing that famous *Polacca guerriera* of his,—which had naturally been given at Riga, 'by general desire.' Toward the end of the month the female contingent of the operatic company was completed by the filling of that awkward gap already more than once referred to. The pearl of price was found at last, in the person of none other than Wagner's Magdeburg "Isabella," Frau Karoline Pollert, whom we last beheld in a painful predicament. On February 25 she appeared before the Riga audience as "prima donna from the Royal and Imperial Court-theatre by the Kärtnerthor in Vienna," and in a few weeks' time became a universal favourite as Agathe, Pamina, Emmeline (*Schweizerfamilie*), Norma and Juliet. But Wagner's relations with the theatre were narrowing to the mere discharge of his duties as conductor, and he kept more and more entirely aloof from intercourse with its members off the stage, "withdrawing into that inner refuge where the yearning to tear myself loose from everyday-life found alike its nurture and its goad" (*P. W.* I. 299).

It was with this idea, perhaps, that as Spring came on he left his gloomy cabin in the inner town, and took new quarters in the S. Petersburg suburb, beyond the twofold girdle of the fortifications. This new abode—which we may call the "Rienzi" house —formed the corner of the Mühlen and Alexander streets, and belonged to one Michael Ivan Bodrow, a Russian trader (afterwards to his heirs). It has since been altered very little: merely there was no shop-front then, the parterre being inhabited by the landlord and his family, the upper floor by Wagner. The entrance was in the Mühlenstrasse; a flight of stairs led to an antechamber opening directly into the study; in the latter stood a divan, a grand piano (hired from Bergmann's, the best firm in Riga), and exactly between the two windows the desk at which the first two acts of *Rienzi* were composed. From this study one passed to the left into Amalie's suite of two chambers; to the right into the salon, a corner room with two windows looking on to the one, and two on to the other of the above-named streets,—hung with red damask curtains. Through that, one worked back by the

married couple's bedroom to the antechamber, issuing by a door opposite to the outer door of Amalie's bedroom; so that there were two ways of getting into the flat without disturbing the composer at his work. With a like intention Amalie had placed the pianino, needful for accompanying her vocal practice, in her bedroom; thus interposing two doors in each direction between it and the central room. The house itself, now 9 Alexanderstrasse, is that where Wagner spent the major portion of his stay in Riga. Having had to pass it every day, the older inhabitants of this suburb still recollect him pipe in mouth at the open window in seasonable weather, clad in a dressing-gown with a kind of Turkish fez on his head; and it is one of my own (C. F. G.'s) boyish memories, how the picture was generally completed by a remark on the refinement and energy of his features, and the look of wanness and suffering they wore.

A foolish statement was made not long ago—in absolute ignorance of the topography,—that this flat of Wagner's lay "in the genteel quarter of the suburbs, and was a selection quite beyond his means." It was nothing of the sort, and his choice was guided simply by the wish for quiet and seclusion. The apartments, as may be seen to this day, were so little pretentious that the salon and study had to take it in turns to serve the office of a dining-room. Merely they were bright and cheerful, easily heated in winter by two good solid Russian stoves, and all the space was made the most of. The same silly canard adds that Wagner had "an elegant carriage expressly hired" to take him to and from the theatre every day.* The journey into town, over two wooden bridges and through the military gate, was a matter of under a quarter of an hour—a mere nothing for a confirmed pedestrian like Wagner—and it *never* occurred to him to take it on wheels.

Turning from "carriage" to sledge, we do know of an excursion to Bolderaa, which he took with his wife this first Spring. He had heard much of the imposing spectacle presented by the pack-ice at the estuary of the Düna, and hopes had been raised of something truly majestic. Instead thereof the outlook on the dreary bosom of the Gulf of Riga, strewn with tumbled clods of

* Both assertions, devoid of all foundation, are to be found in an article styled "Aus R. W.'s Sturm- und Drangzeit" in the feuilleton, edited by J. Prölss, of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Jan. 1888.

mud-stained ice, was one of utter desolation—to say nothing of the cutting blast that blew from the river. Freezing and disillusioned, the pair began their endless journey home. To restore some warmth to their bodies, they took strong brandy at the only inn upon the road, and under its benumbing influence had little knowledge of the drive back in the growing dusk, till the sledge set them safely down by their home late at night. To the master the memory of this sleigh-ride was characteristic of his Riga experiences, and I (C. F. G.) have heard him relate it twice over in different years.

On March 19, 1838, Wagner got up a "Vocal and Instrumental Concert" in the none too large, yet handsome concert-hall of the Schwarzhäupterhaus, with an orchestra considerably reinforced. The first part was opened by the *Columbus* overture; the second commenced with the *Rule Britannia*, composed at Königsberg, and was brought to a highly patriotic close by the "national hymn" *Nikolai* (see p. 233), sung by the whole strength of the operatic company. Holtei recited Schiller's *Lay of the Bell*, Minna Wagner the monologue from the fourth act of the *Maid of Orleans*; Frau Pollert sang an aria from *Jessonda*, also with Amalie Planer and the opera-company in the first Finale from Weber's *Oberon*; instrumental solos were also supplied to the best of ability.

In Schumann's *Zeitschrift* Dorn discusses this musical event with all the airy condescension of a mightily superior person. With reference to the "spectacular and sensational effects" of the *Columbus* overture, Wagner is called "a Hegelianer in the style of Heine, whose feet are rooted in the works of Beethoven, but whose arms gyrate (from practice at the theatre) to the scores of all the world; whilst his still too juvenile heart is bounding in impetuous throbs first here, then there, the head perpendiculates [well done, Dorn!] between the double Bs, BACH and BELLINI." "But," so this polished critic continues, "one cannot serve both God and the Devil; and he who is not for me, is against me. From the bottom of my heart I despise those tedious creatures who, having once recognised this or that as the best, go on to persecute all else with the zeal of a fanatic; if such a one is made a Kapellmeister into the bargain, he straightway becomes the ruin of a theatre, and so forth. But to try to unite every possible style and manner in one's compositions, in order to gain the

votes of every party, is the surest way of doing for oneself with them all." Had we been unable to obtain from elsewhere an unvarnished picture of Wagner's evolution at the time, it would have been far to seek in this precious reflection. The qualities in this tone-poem underlined by the critic himself, those of "Beethovenian working-out — grand thoughts — highly modern externals" (presumably, "means of expression") are the very reverse of an impossible combination of irreconcilable opposites. Do not they sound more like the manifesto of a dauntless young reformer of his art?

We have another echo of this Schwarzhäupter concert, in a letter almost miraculously preserved, affording a lurid glimpse of the trivialities with which the young master was plagued in his daily intercourse with Riga mummers. Dated March 30, it is addressed to a young chorus-singer, Louise Pogrell, who was also given some minor rôle from time to time: her fiancé, the singer Wrede, had chosen to consider either himself or his sweetheart insulted by Wagner, and said as much in a boorish letter to his Kapellmeister. Thereon the latter writes: "I remember, Demoiselle Pogrell, that when I was told Herr W. had forbidden your singing at my concert, I remarked that Herr W.'s influence over you was quite surprising, and I only hoped, in your own interest, he would never relinquish it. To me it is distinctly comical, to have to defend myself and my expression, when the whole thing might be settled by my simple assurance that I had no idea of offending you; I do it, however, since it is a question of an untruth, which calls for refutation. I write to *you*, since it appears that something must be done in the matter, and I—*refuse* to reply to Herr W. himself; for there is only *one* appropriate answer to his letter, and that a quite peculiar one, which I most certainly could give, but will spare him, perhaps to our mutual advantage. So, when next you see him, please tell him simply for heaven's sake to keep his common hands from other people's business, but to apply his feeble intellect to proper learning of his parts, to sing in time if possible, and not to build too confidently on the Kapellmeister's lenience, which perchance might leave him in the lurch some day; he will then do better for himself, in any case; and you perhaps—let us hope, and as I wish—will find in him a husband who can earn himself and you a decent slice of bread. Tell him this just when the opportunity

occurs; there is no manner of hurry. As concerns yourself, however, believe me when I say that in any case my words have been falsely reported to you.—RICHARD WAGNER, Kapellmeister."

The original of this little note, which leaves nothing to be desired in the way of edge, has passed through many an up and down into the best of safe-keeping.* To the Anti-Wagnerite of to-day, as also to those who are so fond of pitting Wagner's "art" against his "person," it may be humbly commended as an apt example of his tyranny, or of his mode of dealing with pretty young actresses,—only they must beware of its playing them a nasty trick, in the good-humour that peeps out even from beneath his just annoyance at impertinences. In any case, let this single instance serve as illustration of that "comedian set" in which a Holtei might feel at home, but whence the young master was longing to escape, if only to the temporary seclusion of his rooms in the Petersburg suburb.

About this time he made his first acquaintance with the subject of the *Flying Dutchman*. He found it while dipping into the pages of Heine's *Salon*, embedded in the cynically frivolous "Memoirs of Herr von Schnabelewopski." It probably was not the absolute first he had heard of this popular legend of the sea; but the deeper motive brought to light here with an instinct of which Heine himself seems ashamed, that redemption of the eternal wanderer through a woman's fidelity, supplied him with fresh food for thought.† "This subject fascinated me, and made

* Namely into the hands of one of the most excellent French "Wagnerians," M. Alfred Bovet of Valentigney, who has kindly consented to its appearance here. The note itself is on a double sheet of quarto paper, folded so that the address occupies one of the outer sides. In her first tantrum the addressee seems to have torn it into tiny fragments, but then—characteristically enough—to have collected the pieces and treasured them up. It has subsequently been restored with such art that its legibility has not suffered in the slightest; in fact it is only upon holding it against the light, that one discovers its earlier mutilation.

† As Heine sarcastically puts it: "The Devil, blockhead that he is, does not believe in woman's faithfulness, and therefore has allowed the curse-beladen captain to land just once in every seven years, to marry and endeavour to use these opportunities for the necessary business of his redemption. Poor Dutchman! he's often glad enough to be redeemed from the marriage-bond itself, to be free of his redemptrix, and get safe on board once more. . . . The moral of the piece, for ladies, is to take good care to wed no flying Dutchmen; for men, that in the best event the women bring us to the ground."

an indelible impression on my mind: still, it did not as yet acquire the needful force for its rebirth within me" (*P. W.* I. 299). For the present he was drawn to a work of far different order.

The utter childishness of the German provincial public's taste had long been acutely felt by him: "Accustomed to nothing but works already judged and accredited by the greater world outside, it is quite incapable of forming an opinion about any art-phenomenon that may chance to make its first appearance at a local theatre." Convinced of this, he had determined at no price to produce a major work on a minor stage: "Therefore when I felt again the inner need of girding my powers for such a work, I renounced all idea of a speedy performance, or of one close at hand. I bent my thoughts on some theatre or other of first rank, and troubled little where and when that theatre would find itself" (*P. W.* I. 12). It is a coincidence that, at the very time when he returned to his cherished plan of *Rienzi*, the foundation-stone of a new and sumptuous theatre was being laid at Dresden; to him it was as yet no omen. He drew up his sketch of a "grand tragic opera in five acts, and planned it on so vast a scale that its first production at any lesser theatre would belong to the impossibilities" (*ibid.*). The situation was of a piece with that of some fourteen years after, when he marked the mighty groundplan of his *Ring des Nibelungen*. Both now and then, with the very mapping out his subject he was shouldering the load of years of sacrifice; neither now nor then, was a grain of its full onus spared him. In the present case, however, he "took no thought for anything but an effective opera-book. 'Grand Opera' with all its scenic and musical pomp, its massive vehemence, loomed large before me; and not merely to copy, but with reckless extravagance to outbid it in its every detail, became the object of my artistic ambition" (*P. W.* I. 299-300). He regarded his subject, to use his own words, through *opera*-glasses, with five grand finales, hymns, processions, and musical clash of arms; nevertheless it is symptomatic, that throughout its execution he was fired by the *dramatic* aspect, to which his music was to give full value without any "flummery."*

* As to the relation of Wagner's drama to the exhaustive epical treatment of the same subject in Bulwer's novel, see E. Reuss: "Rienzi" (*Bayr. Bl.* 1889) and Dr H. von der Pfordten's *Handlung und Dichtung der Bühnenwerke Richard Wagner's nach ihren Grundlagen in Sage und Geschichte* (Berlin,

The May of 1838, in which Wagner completed his twenty-fifth year, was a month of toil for the Kapellmeister with its ten operatic performances; on the evening of his birthday (May 10 in Russia) he had to conduct the *Barbiere*. At the end of the month the whole company, Play and Opera, betook itself to Mitau, the little capital of Courland, where it gave a series of twenty-one representations from the 3rd to the 23rd of June, returning to Riga when they were over. There were no real summer holidays; yet, the audience being a very small one in July, that month demanded on the average but two performances a-week. During this slack time the text of *Rienzi*, already fashioned in the brain of its creator, was written down.

Trowitzsch 1893). Neither author, however, has mentioned the significant fact that Bulwer himself, according to his preface, had been incited to treat the figure of the "Last of the Tribunes" by an earlier *dramatic* version, the "beautiful tragedy" of Miss Mary Russell Mitford (performed in London 1828), from which he borrowed a few felicitous motives, and in particular the tragic love of Adriano for Irene.

VII.

"RIENZI, DER LETZTE DER TRIBUNEN."

"Rienzi" as drama. — Impressions during the first spell of composition: Méhul's "Joseph."—Dorn on the inception of the Rienzi-music.—Dorn's "Schöffe von Paris."—Letter to August Lewald.—Loneliness at Riga; compassion for a young delinquent; the Newfoundland dog Robber.—Wagner replaced by Dorn.

> *This Rienzi with great thoughts in his head, great feelings in his breast, set all my nerves a-quivering with sympathy and love.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

WHOEVER is not a willing victim of self-deception with regard to this work—which the young master so explicitly declared to be no "firstfruit"—must admit that he neither knows nor *can* know it, in the absence of two essentials for such knowledge: a correct performance, or at the least a perfect score.* Mere publication of the latter, indeed, would not preserve the work from further mutilation on the stage. For that one needs clear recognition of the fact that *Rienzi*, even *Rienzi*, was not conceived by its author as absolute "grand opera," but rather as *drama*, or as he himself calls it, a "stage-piece"; a standpoint at which we shall never arrive, as E. Reuss justly says, "until our theatres shall take the trouble to treat the music of 'Rienzi' as means to illustrate the *play* 'Rienzi,' and not stop short at getting up its musical notes." †

* With the solitary exception of Dresden, such a score does not exist at any theatre; the original (in the possession of the King of Bavaria) has not been printed yet, since the public has never evinced a desire for it. On the other hand the pianoforte edition by F. Brissler, professedly "a new revision from the full score," according to E. Reuss has "no relation even to the standard pianoforte arrangement, to say nothing of an authoritative score."

† See the essay by Edward Reuss already cited, which appeared in the *Bayreuther Blätter* (vol. XII. pp. 150 *et seq.*) on the occasion of the admirable

It is very cheap criticism, to judge this work exclusively from the dais of Wagner's later creations; and whoever would appraise it rightly, should endeavour to place himself in the author's position at the time, when he had no full knowledge of the great ideal arising in his breast, but must grope his way unguided toward the unknown new. The poem itself foretells that new path, in the intrinsic distinction between its *dramatic* characterisation and development, and the purely *theatrical* element then prevailing in "Grand Opera"—where everything was dragged on to the stage by the ears, and little had its vindication in human nature. "The overlooking of this difference has led to the most senseless comparisons, that which credits *Rienzi* to the school of Meyerbeer being the very worst." *

That such is the only proper mode to judge *Rienzi*, is shewn by the words of the composer himself; however indisposed to magnify any of his products at cost of the *idea* engrossing him, he was ever juster toward his early work than many of our glib Wagnerian and un-Wagnerian critics. Those words, penned just after the first performance at Dresden, run as follows: "When I began the composition of my 'Rienzi,' I held by nothing save *the single aim to do justice to my subject.* I set myself no model, but surrendered myself to the feeling which consumed me: the feeling that I had already got so far that I might claim something significant from the development of my artistic powers, and expect some not insignificant result. The thought of being consciously weak or trivial—were it in a single bar—was appalling to me" (*P. W.* I. 13).

It will be of interest to outline the circumstances in which the actual work at this *Rienzi* was commenced. In the first half of July, 1838, Wagner coached his Riga company with much enthusiasm in Méhul's *Joseph,—Germanicè* "Jakob und seine Söhne." The preparations and eventual performance were scenes on which his memory ever lingered fondly. In 1860 he says: "The peculiar sense of gnawing pain, that seized me when con-

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Carlsruhe performance in 1889; so far as we are aware, the *only* article that deals seriously with this slighted work of Wagner's according to its æsthetic aspect, its historic antecedents, sources, poetry and music.

* Ed. Reuss, p. 157. See also the luminous remarks of H. S. Chamberlain on page 40 of his *Das Drama Richard Wagner's*—p. 71 of the French edition, *Le Drame Wagnérien* (unfortunately there as yet exists no English version).

ducting the ordinary rut of operas, was relieved at times by an ineffable feeling of wellbeing. . . . I felt uplifted and ennobled for the while, when rehearsing Méhul's glorious 'Joseph' with a minor operatic company. That such impressions, revealing undreamt possibilities, could now and then present themselves,—it was this that chained me to the theatre, intense tho' my disgust at the typical spirit of our opera-performances" (*P. W.* III. 304). The details of this representation were still sharp in the master's mind another two decads thereafter: he distinctly remembered the excellent Bohemian cornists whom he had procured from a military band; they had strange great winding horns, which they carried coiled around their necks, — and thus he made them march upon the stage. The first performance was on Thursday, July 14 (26), with a repetition three days later.* About then began the composition of *Rienzi*: the manuscript sketch for the music of the first scene is dated July 26 to August 7.

In August the company returned to its regulation three operas per week, and on the 31st the first year of Holtei's management closed with the *Postillon von Longjumeau.*† There was no respite for Wagner, however, as on September 2 he had to conduct the first opera of the new season. The only change worth mentioning in the company was the replacement of ill-mannered Köhler by Johann Hoffmann, who happened to be passing through Riga on his way from S. Petersburg into Germany, and was offered a few months' engagement as tenor. He made his first appearance this opening night, as Fra Diavolo, and with such pronounced success that he gladly consented to stay. The friendly relations upon which he now entered with the master

* The cast as follows: Jacob, a shepherd from the land of Hebron, Hr Scheibler; Joseph, Governor of Egypt under the name of Cleophas, Hr Janson; Reuben, Hr Petrick; Simeon, Hr Wrede; Naphthali, Hr Sammet; Levi, Hr Kurt, etc.; Benjamin, Amalie Planer. The opera was repeated July 17 and Dec. 23, 1838, and Feb. 20, 1839; a fourth repetition, already arranged for May 29, 1839, did not come off.

† To sum it up, during this first twelvemonth at Riga (including the Mitau diversion) Wagner conducted 16 separate operas: *Romeo* (Bellini's Montechi) 10 times; *Freischütz* 9 times; *Norma* and the *Postillon* 8 times each; *Dame Blanche*, *Zampa* and *Fra Diavolo*, 6 times each; the *Zauberflöte* (Magic Flute) and *Barbiere* 5 times each; *Don Juan*, *Figaro*, the *Schweizerfamilie* and *Stumme* (Masaniello), 4 times each; *Jakob und seine Söhne* (Joseph), *Maurer und Schlosser* (Le Maçon), and *Wasserträger* (Cherubini's Les Deux Journées) twice apiece,—making 85 performances in all.

were maintained throughout his subsequent directorship of the Riga theatre, of that at Frankfurt a.M., and later of the Josefstädter theatre in Vienna, down to his death in 1865. His wife also proved a useful acquisition, and soon gained popularity, ousting Amalie Planer from several of the Bellinian and Rossinian rôles she hitherto had filled with credit.

Besides the official duties of conductor, impecuniosity and the stern compulsion to meet it by additional work demanded extra sacrifice of time and strength. One sign of this is given by a paper dated September 11, a circumstantial appeal to the members of his band to assist him in a series of six Orchestral Concerts.* These concerts actually came about; a noteworthy fact in view of the rather barren musical soil at Riga, and a strong proof of the young man's indomitable energy,—thereafter Dorn and others made various attempts to repeat the experiment, but systematically failed.

Amid such outward calls and interruptions, the composition of *Rienzi* made but halting progress. Apropos of the "very agreeable hours he passed in Wagner's household," Dorn paints a somewhat bizarre picture of the gradual upbuilding of the work. "It was with great interest that I saw the first sketches of *Rienzi* spring up, and heard one scene after another at the pianoforte. Wagner had intended Adriano for his sister-in-law Frl. Planer [?], who had to undertake all the treble parts at these reunions. The gentlemen present, mostly including the 'cellist from the theatre band, humorous Carl von Lutzau, sang whatever they could pick from the hash—and outside the house in the S. Petersburg suburb bearded Russians stood aghast at the hullabaloo going on up aloft until late in the night. At these soirées the wires of the piano would fly asunder like spray before the wind, so that the composer at last could bring out nothing but a flail-like rattle, accompanied by the pleasing jangle of metal snakes as they writhed on the sounding-board. Not that that disturbed us, in presence of such a score; it was all in the day's work—with a pianist so stout of fist as Wagner."

So much for Dorn's imaginative account. He himself would appear to have scented the absurdity of his statement that the

* This draft was put up to auction in Berlin, June 1886, as "2½ pages large folio, 104 long lines," and knocked down at 96 marks to some private autograph-hunter or other.

rôle of Adriano was "intended" for Amalie Planer (in fact, for any singer of the then-existing Riga company); at anyrate, when he repeats it elsewhere, he endeavours to make it a little more colourable by the following sentence: "As she was an excellent interpretress of Bellinian alto parts, it seems quite natural that he should have laid this rôle in a similar register, tho' it certainly stamps the opera with a hybrid style." For all that, we cannot detect in this shaky argument one glimmer of a truly Wagnerian reason, one trace of the impulsive young artist's utter heedlessness of the means for a future presentation of his work: it is nothing save the "but and if," the flimsy combinations of the narrator's own peculiar logic.* To *him* the oddness of Wagner's overweening plan, his apparent disregard of "practical success," were still inexplicable a quarter of a century (1869) after that success itself had become a fact indelibly recorded in the history of art. However, we may glean a tiny silhouette from this caricature; the twenty-five year old musician in his suburban flat, seated at his Bergmann grand with the nascent pages of his composition in front of him, his head in the score, surrounded by a strange assortment of Riga intimates, whom, so long as they remained within the magic circle, he electrified and roused to faith in him and his project; whilst the picture may be completed by Löbmann's verbal recollection of the gentle Minna wiping the perspiration from her husband's forehead as he played.

The Church-Conductor knew better how to pull the strings of Riga. On the best of terms with Holtei, popular with the inhabitants of the town through a residence of several years, and assured of the good offices of his younger friend at the conductor's desk, that autumn he had handed in the harmless score of a two-act comic opera, *Der Schöffe von Paris* ("The Sheriff of Paris," text by W. A. Wohlbrück). In October came the rehearsals, on November 1, 1838, the first performance. Wagner took infinite pains to render the fullest justice to this work of his colleague's, as some sort of "return" for his whilom introduction of the youth of eighteen summers to the Leipzig

* This passage may be compared with the delicious account in Dorn's *Ergebnisse* (pp. 45-52) of his canvass among princesses, prime donne, wives of councillors etc., for recommendations to his subsequent appointment in Berlin.

public,—a history Dorn had rescued from oblivion in its every detail only a short while before, in course of that criticism of Wagner's Schwarzhäupter concert already cited. "He was most painstaking at rehearsals, as I had the best opportunity of judging in the case of my own opera; and when he stood at the desk his fiery temperament carried even the oldest members of the band away with him," says Dorn in after days, though he took the baton into his own hands on the first evening of performance.* This first performance also served as Benefit for the wife of tenor Johann Hoffmann, and was distinguished by a quantity of new scenery, including a look-out from the top of the tower of Notre Dame over midnight Paris. The music was light and entertaining, in its way, but complaints were heard of long-windedness and tedious repetitions, especially in the "comic" numbers.† With the help of cuts the opera was kept alive for the rest of the season, and reached its seventh performance on February 1; after that, however, its mountings were annexed for Frau Birchpfeiffer's sensational drama *Der Glöckner von Paris.*‡ When Dorn himself assumed the reins, a "reprise" was tried, but got no further than a modest run.

About the time of this easy local triumph of his colleague's, Wagner, in the full flush of his *Rienzi* music, was straining every nerve to pave the way for its acceptance at a leading centre. It still was *Paris* to which he clung, and whereby alone he could

* The latter circumstance will probably account for Dorn's having inspired his own biographer (*Sammlung von Musikbiographieen*, Cassel, Balde, 1856, p. 90) to assign this production to the period *after* Wagner's departure, thus ignoring his former friend's great share in the preliminary study.

† The Riga *Zuschauer* of Nov. 3 has a report on it, remarking that the two acts played from 6 to 9.30 P.M., and the whole thing was too long; the house was crowded, but it was not until the middle of the first act, with a grand aria for Herr Günther (as Sheriff), that applause became general; "at its close the composer was tumultuously called for."

‡ This spectacular horror of the "Royal Prussian Upper-court-poetess" was also witnessed by Wagner at Riga (May 25, 1839). In 1851 he cites it as a characteristic specimen of German play-concocting: "Let anyone compare their sham original-pieces with the genuine Parisian articles from which they are derived; let him set Ch. Birchpfeiffer's adaptation of Hugo's *Notre Dame* beside the adaptation given at the Paris Théâtre de l'Ambigu Comique [evidently between 1840 and 1842]: he then will feel the unexampled wretchedness of our theatric art, in which one has come to be content with the vilest copies of copies vile themselves" (*P. W.* III. 33-34).

hope for signal recognition in his fatherland. We have a letter to August Lewald dated Nov. 12, 1838, in which he resumes with his inimitable joviality a correspondence broken off long since. Rendering an account of his later adventures, he says: "In spite of my most ardent yearning southwards, my stupid destiny has driven me yet farther north. Vexations of every sort had made me forget all about my French expedition for ever so long; nor have I had another answer from Scribe. But somehow I'm not so easy to smother down, with my hopes and plans." He considers that Paris and Scribe are now too *far away*, and he wants a middleman to work the business up for him. "What prompts me to pester just *you*, who must have quite enough Richard Wagners on your hands without me?" His excuse must be the kindness already shewn him by Lewald, and the fact that Schlesier is associated with the publisher of *Europa*: his old Dresden and Leipzig schoolmate will surely warm L. up to interest in him.* In that case he would like Lewald to use his journalistic influence to get Scribe to make a declaration in the matter of that operatic draft twice sent him; for which purpose he now encloses a further special copy of the sketch for the *Hohe Braut*. "If the subject pleases neither Scribe nor you—why! I've another about me. This very instant I am working at a grand opera, *Rienzi*; the text is quite finished, and I've composed one act already. This 'Rienzi,' beyond a doubt, is far more grandiose than that subject; I mean to compose it in the German tongue, just to see if there is any possibility of getting it to the Berlin Opera in 50 years time (should God spare my life). Perhaps it may please Scribe, and Rienzi could sing French in a jiffy; or it might be a means of prodding up the Berliners, if one told them that the Paris stage was ready to accept it, but they were welcome to precedence. . . . As to matter and unflagging will, I

* It will be remembered that a fragment of this letter appeared on page 93; after saying that Schlesier must tell him (L.) all about their discussions at the Kreuzschule, and how they were tripped by Schelling's Transcendental Idealism, "for which I still owe him 12 groschen," he recalls how they "were eating ices one Sunday with Laube, when I brought him his decree of banishment.— —My God! he must remember Ortlepp and Lauchstädt, and then say if *that* is not enough to make a man interest himself for me; to say nothing of such an operatic chance, which is bound to make both him and everyone connected with it right immortal!"

shan't prove lacking; I feel very plainly that I should have produced God knows how much already, if only the door had stood open to me. Heaven witness that I say it in no arrogant spirit, but thus much is certain: if within 15 years I am not finally emancipated—I shall be audacious enough to write operas for Frankfurt an der Oder or Tilsit! . . . So, most worthy Sir, just experiment with me on this emancipation of an opera-composer. Shew what a German can do for a German whom he doesn't even know by sight, and for whom he is merely acting in the interest of a whole race of composers! Naturally, you will then obtain a quite special extra statue in that Pantheon the Germans are sure to be building soon for their men of merit; and, in his wonder at a German scholar's helping a poor German composer to Parisian honours, God will be at a loss to know what blessing to bestow upon you. . . ."

It is not for any practical effect, any manner of material result, that this letter is of moment; solely for the glimpse it affords of the high spirits and plastic energy of the young genius in whose breast surge schemes and fancies that, for all their explosive impromptu, still keep touch with the inner march of his development. His notion of a Paris success had nothing of a really practical *plan* about it as yet, but was rather a pleasing day-dream by aid of which he might forget the bitterness and insufficiency of his actual surroundings. And yet what impassioned earnestness there lurks behind the airy vision! Who could have read these lines without the liveliest sympathy, a strong desire to help? And nowadays who would not envy its recipient the chance of yielding such assistance?—Indeed it seems that the worthy Stuttgart editor lacked less of will, than of ability to carry out the terms of this strange young man's request. What lay in Lewald's power, he gladly did; for in a supplement to the fourth quarterly number of his magazine for 1839 we find fulfilment of the wish expressed in this letter's postscript: "I came across the following poem in the 'Muses' Almanack.'* Little partial as I am to this particular fir-tree melancholy, in Lithuania one can't avoid it altogether; so I have set the poem in the Lithuanian key [E flat minor], and enclose it to you with a petition to insert it in

* *Deutscher Musenalmanach* for the year 1838, edited by A. v. Chamisso and G. Schwab, Leipzig, Weidmann, pp. 129-35; "Poems by G. Scheuerlin," *Der Tannenbaum* constituting number 5.

the *Europa*. Only, you mustn't take this as a sample of my manner of composing operas. That, I believe I may say, thank God, is not so Lithuanian."

There was cause enough for "Lithuanian melancholy," in this city of well-to-do merchants. It stayed shy to him, and he to it, as we gather from a remark in an account of the first Riga performance of the *Flying Dutchman*: "Wagner had lived in much too unpretentious quiet here, to rouse great expectations" (*N. Z. f. M.*, 1843). No one had any suspicion of his powers; he was just the musical conductor, whose efforts to provide an amusing and successful presentation of Adam's and Bellini's operas were taken as nothing more than he was paid for. Who troubled their heads as to whether that was strictly his affair or not, and what other capabilities and glowing ideals he might harbour within him? With all its countless trivialities, the mere discharge of his official duty would not in itself have proved a wearing task; but the worst of it was, the constant dunning of his Prussian creditors gave him no chance of placidly browsing on his scanty wage, and forced him to additional exertions such as those orchestral concerts of the winter 1838-39. Throw into the scale a somewhat serious illness this selfsame winter, and his experiences of daily life within and without the theatre will be found of none too cheerful sort.

To give an illustration: One day it transpired that a spare chest had been broken open, and rifled of the best part of its contents. The young servant-girl's tearful protestations of innocence supplied a clue to the real offender, who turned out to be none other than her sweetheart. The Riga police suffering from a chronic attack of red-tape, the complainant was summoned to an outlying district of the Petersburg suburb, to identify the recovered articles. It was then explained to him that, if the value of what had been stolen exceeded a certain sum (presumably 100 roubles), the thief must be packed off to Siberia without further ado. Heartily disposed to rate the things as low as possible, to save the poor wretch from such a fate, it was a relief to Wagner's conscience to be able to do it truthfully: they were chiefly 'properties' from Minna's old stage-wardrobe, and honestly below the fatal figure.* He next was told: That made

* One regal *mantle* from this wardrobe plays a rôle in a domestic scene of these Riga times, accidentally resuscitated for us. Minna is cross with her

no difference, as there were aggravating circumstances. Thereon he was confronted with the unfortunate young man, pale, his hair close-cropped, in prison garb,—"a heart-rending sight." It did not need the culprit's entreaties, to turn the prosecutor into fervid counsel for the defence. But again the word of Justice came: "Herr Wagner, your pleadings can avail nothing; the man not only is a military deserter, but has robbed once before."

Relating this incident some forty years later, the master made no further comment; but his voice vibrated from the shock he had felt at the coldness and indifference with which such men could dare decide a fellow-creature's fate. Indeed it was no political fad that made the warm-hearted artist explode at a certain epoch of his life into open rebellion against the modern State and its sheltering of the "civic philistine," but that immediate feeling in the breast of every generous man of parts that our state-and-police civilisation has deviated many a league from right development of man's moral and social faculties,—as Goethe expresses it:

husband: he had wounded her sense of order by abstracting this cloak from her keeping for ends which she cannot divine. She has locked herself up in her room, and Wagner—a past master in the arts of coaxing and conciliation (twenty years later, just before their final severance, he says, "I pet her as if on a honeymoon")—sits down to *write* an explanation, but casts it aside upon finding that it would have to grow long-winded, to be complete. "Little simpleton that thou art!"—begins this attempt—"Just because a joke has quite missed fire, is that any reason for teasing one so? I had meant to make myself magnificent in thy mantle, then appear before thee, at my hand a doll with just such another mantle, underneath it a cradle with thy future little one inside; and so we three—I, Natalie [Minna's youngest sister, then staying with them] and the future one—would have sunk to thy feet, and craved forgiveness for the loan. For this I filched a little from thee, things I thought thou least would miss, odds and ends for the doll and the cot; but the whole plan was spoilt, *first* by my not knowing . . ." Here the draft note breaks off; but years before the discovery of the little document the narrator (C. F. G.) had heard from the inhabitants of the Bodrowsky house about this cradle with its big doll under a silken quilt. It was probably intended as a Christmas surprise, a humorous alleviation of that childlessness both he and Minna felt so sorely. This will be fully understood, if we remember that from his childhood Wagner had been accustomed to seeing family-life made gay at every opportunity by such fantastic pleasantries. Long afterwards (July 3, 1878) he cried: "Ah! then one still had household garlands! Then a poem was composed and enacted for every birthday; no festival without its special ode.—That has all been altered now!" Do not we recollect how, in the trouble of his last illness, stepfather Geyer bewails his inability to adorn the mother's birthday with the usual fanciful surprise?

"Don't talk to me of State and statesmen! They know only to forbid, to hinder and reject; but seldom to command, to help, reward. One lets everything go on till it becomes a nuisance; then one fires up and hits out hard!" Not alone among mankind's great teachers was Wagner ever of opinion that, the existing social system rendering crime a necessary consequence, Society itself is *responsible* for its commission,—the true meaning of that sudden cry of Parsifal's: "Und *ich*, ich *bin's*, der all dies Elend schuf!" In 1851 he says, "In this sense a criminal case had the same interest to me as a political action; I could but take the side of the suffering party, and in exact degree of vehemence as it was engaged in resisting any kind of oppression" (*P. W.* I. 355). On the day when he returned to his apartments from the stuffy court of Riga divisional Justice, we may be sure the young composer of *Rienzi* had not the heart to write a single note.

Many another trait of Riga life remained stamped on his memory, down to the revolting sight of the barrow-loads of frozen swine, sawn in half from snout to buttock, wherewith Consul Sch. then provisioned the English mariners, and the like of which one still may see in the open streets of Riga. Over these we need not linger. A pleasanter recollection was that of a splendid Newfoundland dog that made his first acquaintance at the shop of a certain Armitstead, and soon attached itself to him with passionate devotion; the dog to whom Wagner has raised a lasting monument in his *End of a German Musician in Paris*. This noble beast would follow the lord of its choice like a shadow, and went the length of besieging his lodgings until he relented and let it in. In the year 1878, when a drawing of his Riga home was shewn him, Wagner at once put his finger on the spot where "Robber" used to lie and guard the street-door. If he went to town for a rehearsal, Robber formed his constant escort,—on the way it would take its bath in the moat, even in winter, if only a hole could be found in the ice. Once at a band-rehearsal in the Schwarzhäupter-hall it majestically encamped by the conductor's desk, preserving an honourable silence, though it fixed the nearest contrabassist with its eye; as the player's bow made straight for it at every stroke, it may have considered this a personal menace; there comes an extra-vigorous stroke, Robber snaps at it,—a cry of alarm: "The dog, Herr

Kapellmeister!" Recollections of this kind the Bayreuth master was never tired of reviving.

The beginning of 1839 was marked by unexpected changes at the theatre. Director Holtei had suddenly lost his wife (a valued actress, Julie Holzbecher) on the 29th December; the public shewed wide-spread sympathy, and Wagner *is said* to have set music to a "Gesang am Grabe" by H. v. Brackel for her solemn interment in the Jacobi graveyard.* Four weeks later, after playing in *Lorbeerbaum und Bettelstab* the previous night, Holtei left town with his daughter by a first marriage, ostensibly for a starring tour abroad; the completeness of his preliminary arrangements, however, proves it to have been with the deliberate intention not to return. The reasons for this mysterious departure have never been quite cleared up; nevertheless at a meeting of the Theatre-committee and other interested parties, presided over by Oberfiskal v. Cube, it was resolved to release the director from his contract "amicably and with all honour." He had appointed as his substitute, in other words successor, the tenor Johann Hoffmann, a well-informed and excellent fellow. The latter behaved in the friendliest manner to Wagner, but was powerless against the fact that, *before* his departure and without so much as a hint to his Kapellmeister, Holtei had already adopted every measure for his supersession by his nearest Riga friend—H. Dorn! It is of no use Dorn's asseverating that the decisive step was taken by Hoffmann (*Ergebnisse*, p. 164), for we have documentary evidence that the whole thing was signed and sealed by Dorn and Holtei behind Wagner's back, and the compact made binding upon the new director. No wonder Dorn has something to tell us, in his Recollections, of Wagner's flaming indignation upon discovering in the first week of March that this plot had been hatched fully a month before: "It was with difficulty that a friend of both parties, Committee-man Herr Schwederski, succeeded in somewhat appeasing his rage." A correspondence on the subject, continues Dorn, led to no substantial understanding,—he considers its publication superfluous. Very like! At anyrate in August of that very year he steps into

* So the *Düna-Zeitung* of July 20, 1893, would have it. But the painful mediocrity of the verses quoted is against such a supposition.

Wagner's shoes, and remains there until 1843 with much delight and undocked pay.*

Richard Wagner's position at Riga had of late been by no means so "untenable" as Dorn would make out.† For over a year and a half he had been in the enjoyment of a regular, though unjustly stinted income, while his actual expenditure on outward comfort had been but small. How little he was above eking it out by any honest means, is apparent from a letter addressed to Hoffmann in which he offers to submit to whatever additional burden the director may choose to lay on his shoulders, for sake of earning a trifle extra during the fag end of his Riga sojourn: "I would even copy out notes," he jokingly adds, "if I did not fear the melancholy task would too much damp my spirits." Had the late director Holtei wished to render his first conductor's position more "tenable," nothing would have been easier than to grant him the *same* allowance made without exception to his predecessors and successors.

Such was the state of affairs at the beginning of March 1839. The idea of Paris, which had been nothing but a flattering vision at the commencement of his composition of *Rienzi*, assumed more and more concrete shape as the work wore on. The instrumentation of the first act had been completed February 6, the second shortly after put in hand. He must now ascertain if the turn in the lane would be marked by this opera, and decides to venture in person on the hazardous journey to the metropolis of modern art. The idea becomes a project; the project presses to solution; all bitterness at the wrong just suffered is swallowed up. From now onwards we see the young artist, brimful of confidence in his good star, most sedulously

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* In place of Löbmann (dismissed by Holtei himself, to Wagner's sincere regret) a certain Edward Tauwitz of Warsaw became second conductor and chorus-master, the same "queer little chap" about whom Dorn records the Wagnerian bon-mot: "Nobody sees him coming, nobody sees him go; but of a sudden he's here, of a sudden he's off,"—which bears traces of having been soaked in a muddy memory.

† How much it had improved financially-speaking since his arrival, may be gathered from a letter of Feb. 9, 1844, to his old Magdeburg friend, tenor Friedrich Schmidt: "Within two years' stay at Riga, after refunding advances and paying off old judgment-debts, I had got so far as to be able to think of my debt to yourself, when I was suddenly deprived of my appointment there, and could think of nothing but saving myself from extremities."

scraping together the *means* for his daring exploit. As he had already had his stipulated Benefit at the end of last year (Nov. 30, 1838), with a representation of Meyerbeer's *Robert*, no further favour could be asked of the theatre; but the 14th of March had been fixed for the fifth of that series of six orchestral concerts referred to more than once: the members of the band at once consented to make it a Benefit for the conductor, especially as some such step had been originally contemplated. To ensure a good house, he issued a "concert-announcement," dated the 8th of March, containing the following sentence: "Within the past few days I have received distressing notice of my dismissal from the post I have hitherto held at this city's theatre, as that post had been accorded by Herr Holtei to another person for the coming year; to myself it would therefore be most gratifying, to be assured by the interest displayed in this my concert that an honoured public is as satisfied as my present Director, Herr Hoffmann, with my diligence and unremitting attention to my duties." The concert opened with Beethoven's C minor Symphony, and closed with Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, an overture unheard till then in Riga.

Nor was Minna behindhand. She not only recited the monologue of Beatrice from Schiller's *Bride of Messina* at the concert, but appeared four times as "guest" at the theatre between April 8 and 18, playing Preziosa, Maria Stuart, and the title-rôle in Th. Hell's *Christinen's Liebe und Entsagung*. "A very pleasing exterior, grace of carriage and animated play of features, make her a most attractive figure on the stage," we read in the Riga *Zuschauer* of April 20 (May 2), 1839; "Merely her declamation, though highly expressive, sounds strange and at times a little indistinct; which may be partly due to Mme. Wagner's not having trod the boards for so long a time, and perhaps having fallen somewhat out of practice." Unfortunately these four evenings came too late in the season, and the last of them had to contend with the powerful competition of a concert given in the Schwarzhäuptersaal by a contrabassist from Milan; the house accordingly consisted of little more than the regular subscribers, and the young Queen of Sweden had to hold her Court in the presence of very empty benches.

Meanwhile Wagner was busy with the French teacher Henriot at a provisional translation of his *Rienzi* text; a labour that

threatened to consume more time than could be spared on the eve of his departure. One drag upon the undertaking was the fact of his collaborator's not being so well up in German as in French. Hence an episode remembered by the master: In the first scene, when Adriano attacks the Orsini faction who are carrying off Irene, old Colonna airily assigns her to him as spoil; the young noble, however, treats the incident more seriously, and surprises them all by crying out: "Hands off! My blood for hers!" This excites the scorn of his opponents, and the head of the Orsinis contemptuously remarks: "Er spielt fürwahr den Narren gut," i.e., "He can never be such a fool as to take a plebeian damsel seriously!" Now, Wagner had translated this: "*Il joue fort bien le fou*"; but the French-master would neither understand it, nor let it pass. Oddly enough, though the Dresden text-book of 1842 has the original German line, we find it weakened down in the pianoforte-score, as also in the standard edition of the poem, into "Er spielt fürwahr den *Helden* gut."

The month of May was drawing to its close: Wagner had completed his twenty-sixth year, and the composition of the second act of *Rienzi*. At the beginning of the month two concerts had been given by Lipinski in the theatre, when Wagner conducted overtures and orchestral accompaniments. The talented Polish fiddler had just relinquished an honourable position at S. Petersburg as first violinist to the Russian court, in obedience to a call to *Dresden*; three years after this first encounter Wagner found him installed as Konzertmeister of the Dresden Court-opera, under Reissiger. For Amalie's farewell benefit her brother-in-law had yet to get up a performance of *Figaro*, in which she sang the part of Cherubino with charm and grace. His own last appearance at Riga was to have been as conductor of Méhul's *Joseph* (Monday, May 29, Russian style); but owing to a singer's illness that repetition never came off, and *Fra Diavolo* was given instead—quite of a piece with his whole Riga embroglio.

Two days later Wagner and all the stage-company were under way for Mitau, for the usual summer engagement in June. It can have been with no particular regret that he left Riga for good, though he retained a pleasant memory throughout his life of those who had dealt squarely by him, such as the excellent Hoffmann and, above all, his trusty subordinate Löbmann.

"Certainly, dearest friend," he writes to the latter in Dec. 1843, "I shall never forget how often toward the end of my sojourn you proved yourself my warmest solace and my truest friend. Whenever I think back to those days I am mostly filled with bitter humours, and I assure you that I left Riga as cold and indifferent as its populace had been to me: the only people I was sorry to part from, were yourself and the majority of the members of the orchestra; who, I really believe, gave me their affection and regard."

VIII.

FROM RIGA TO PARIS.

Difficulties of leaving Russia.—Last performances at Mitau.—Crossing the Russian frontier.—Embarcation at Pillau.—Norway: the Sound and the "Champagne-mill."—London.—Arrival at Boulogne.—Meyerbeer.—Paris at the end of the thirties.

Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.
SENECA.

Is there no star that rules the fate of each inspired soul?
May not his be a star of luck?
RICHARD WAGNER (*An End in Paris*).

"To get away from Russia unobserved, was no light matter in those days. Before the actual passport-worries, the chase from one official to another, could begin, the prospective traveller must be thrice proclaimed in the public papers for the benefit of all who might have claims against him." Thus Dorn's contribution to the history of the times.

Now, the Riga newspapers contain the legal "proclamation" of all artists and other individuals, native and foreign, about to cross the frontier outward-bound: the name of Richard Wagner would be sought in vain. To say nothing of judgment-summonses from his year of utter want at Königsberg, a few Riga creditors had still to be settled with—some of them, in fact, had such good memories that they dug up their bills for the master's delectation in the seventies! Had he been continuing in the town, it would have been easy to compound for a more favourable season; but any announcement of immediate departure could have been countered at once by the pettiest claim. Consequently, the Paris project must be kept as dark as possible. Among the few admitted to the secret were the kindly director and Heinrich Dorn, the latter having joined the Mitau expedition to reap the fruits of a personally-conducted representation

of his *Schöffe von Paris* at the modest little theatre on June the 10th. For the two remaining months of the theatrical year, July and August, Hoffmann had requested Dorn to undertake the conductor's duties, willy-nilly, and relinquish the pay to the colleague he had ousted. Forty years later, in his *Ergebnisse aus Erlebnissen* (p. 164), Dorn unctuously prides himself on this special act of friendship toward Wagner!

A souvenir of this month at Mitau has been preserved in the shape of a letter to French-teacher Henriot about that *Rienzi* translation. As time was pressing, Wagner had completed it himself at Riga, and left the manuscript in the hands of his collaborator for correction and improvement: hoping that these ameliorations of his "mauvaise traduction" have been carried out meanwhile, he begs him to send it to his present address "si bientôt que possible."* This pending, the Mitau cycle pursued its appointed course. It had begun with *Das unterbrochene Opferfest* (Amalie Planer as Elvira), and continued to warm up a portion of last winter's Riga menu, with Meyerbeer's *Robert* as bonne-bouche. The last of these performances was that of Weber's *Oberon* on June 25, in honour of Tsar Nicholas's birthday, introduced by Wagner and von Brackel's *National Hymn*. Next day the company returned to Riga, whilst their quondam musical conductor struck out south.†

Through the woods and flowering meads of Courland he made by the main causeway for the Prussian frontier. The dangers of its crossing then are graphically described by Dorn: "Every thousand yards stood a sentry-hut, where a Cossack kept watch when not on his beat; in between patrolled the picket, keeping watch upon the sentries. This chain was difficult to break, but

* This interesting document, comprising 32 written lines, reappeared at an autograph-sale in 1886, and, in spite of its rather indifferent French, was purchased by an unknown collector for a good stiff sum.

† Having given a list of the 16 operas conducted by Wagner in his first Riga season, we may add a similar one for this second year, including the Mitau succursal (June 4 to 25). During the season 1838-39 we have 23 separate works rehearsed and led by him: *Robert le Diable* 9 times; *Das unterbrochene Opferfest* 7 times; *Freischütz* and *Postillon de Lonjumeau* 6 times each; *Norma*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Fidèle Berger* (Germ.—*Zum treuen Schäfer*), 5 times each; *Romeo* and *Othello* 4 times each; *Joseph*, *Fidelio*, *Jessonda*, *Zauberflöte*, *Barbiere*, *Preziosa*, 3 times each; *Don Giovanni*, *Figaro*, *Dame Blanche*, *Oberon*, *Schweizerfamilie*, *Zampa*, twice apiece; *Stumme von Portici*

not impossible." He goes on to relate how a tenor Franz Mehlig in 1834 had taken a fortnight in accomplishing the feat, only to die of brain-fever brought on by the harass. Returning to Wagner, he continues: "A Königsberg art-patron by the name of Abraham Möller, well known in the northern theatrical world, had taken every precaution that the warm cabin of a border-Cossack should prove safe shelter for the fugitives while its legitimate tenant was making his tour of inspection and manœuvring a pause in the game of picquet. Four days later the rescued man was looking out from an upper window in the inn at Arnau upon Königsberg, some five miles distant."

An amusing episode in this Arnau halt was recollected by the master. Möller had the distressing habit of snoring in his sleep, —an inconvenience in quarters so close as the tavern bedroom; so it was settled that if he grew too clamorous, his room-mate should whistle and stop him. While slumber still shunned the composer's eyelids, the solo began; Wagner whistled with all his might; but his companion slept soundly, and snored on. Robber, however, took the whistling for itself, came to the bed of its master, and began to lick his face; the louder he whistled, the warmer became the attentions of his four-footed friend. Wherever Wagner went, whatever he went through, there was sure to be a dog-story attached to it.

From Arnau the travellers proceeded to the little Prussian port of Pillau, to embark on a sailing-ship for England, on the way to Paris. "The impudence of artists!"—cries Laube three years after—"To have come with a wife, an opera and a half, a slender purse and a terribly large and terribly ravenous Newfoundland dog, through sea and storm, straight from the Dwina to the Seine, to make his name in Paris! In Paris, where half Europe competes

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and the first act of Mozart's *Entführung aus dem Serail* once,—making 83 performances in all. Besides these, he did all the rehearsing for Dorn's *Schöffe von Paris*, conducted by the composer himself seven times at Riga and once at Mitau; on the other hand, Wagner's illness in the winter necessitated a temporary replacement by Löbmann. Attention may be drawn to the fact that, albeit he devoted so much trouble to that new opera of his shifty friend's, Wagner left his own *Feen* and *Liebesverbot* on the shelf. The cast of *Fidelio*, Feb. 24, 1839, may prove of interest: Florestan, Hr Hoffmann (beneficiary); Fidelio, Mme Hoffmann; Rocco, Hr Günther; Pizarro, Hr Wrede; Marzelline, Mme Pollert. *Fidelio* was repeated at Riga on March 8, and at Mitau June 24.

for the jingle of fame; where all must pay toll, even the most meritorious, if it would come on the market, and thus to recognition!"

The voyage was rich in adventures never to be forgotten. There was no proper accommodation for passengers aboard; the ship was badly provisioned and scantily manned. Terrible weather prevailed the whole time. Wagner, his wife and the big dog, were sea-sick almost all the way. Thrice was the ship overtaken by violent storms, and once her captain was compelled to put into a Norwegian haven. The passage through the Sound made a wonderful impression upon Wagner's fancy. The figure of the Flying Dutchman, whose closer acquaintance he had made at Riga, loomed up again amid the reefs and breakers. He heard more of the legend from the seamen's mouths, and it acquired an individual colour from his instant peril. Hereafter the magical skein of fable and reality was to weave itself into an artwork, in which we may even trace a name or two from local sources: "Sandwike ist's! Genau kenn' ich die Bucht," says Daland in the opera's first scene; and the fjord of Sandwike, by Arendal, was navigated in a storm this July 1839. Their obligatory landing on the coast of Norway formed a merry diversion, which the master was fond of relating as the story of the "Champagne-mill": —Together with a portion of the crew, the dripping passengers climb up the rocks, and arrive at an old windmill, where they are hospitably entertained. There is only one bottle of rum in the house, but the hearty miller brings it out in triumph for his guests. Punch is brewed; the cockles of their hearts are warmed, the sailors sing songs, and general mirth holds sway. After a day or two the storm abates, and once more they put to sea; but not before fresh storms have further checked their course, is the good ship steered into the Nore.

Three weeks and a half had the terrible voyage to London endured, and the travellers were glad of a week of rest. Mr Edward Dannreuther (founder of the London Wagner Society in 1872, and Wagner's host in 1877) tells us in his interesting essay in *Grove's Dictionary* that the master and Minna "lodged for a night at the Hoop and Horseshoe, 10 Queen Street, Tower Hill, still existing; then stayed at the King's Arms boarding-house, Old Compton Street, Soho, from which place the dog disappeared, and turned up again after a couple of days, to his master's frantic

joy. Wagner's accurate memory for localities was puzzled when he wandered about Soho with the writer in 1877 and failed to find the old house. Mr J. Cyriax, who has zealously traced every step of Wagner's in London 1839, 55, and 77, states that the premises have been pulled down." *

Referring in 1842 to this first visit to London, Wagner says: "Nothing interested me so much as the city itself and the Houses of Parliament,—not one of the theatres did I attend." It must have been a relief to watch the busy throngs in the streets, after confinement to a tiny craft, but the newcomer's eye was naturally attracted to the forest of masts below London Bridge, a magnification of the spectacle at Riga. A trip to Greenwich was made forthwith, according to Praeger (who, by the way, did not meet Wagner until 1855). Moored in the Thames, just above the palace, lay the Dreadnought, redolent of Nelson and Trafalgar Bay: boarding it, Wagner accidentally dropped his snuff-box, "a present from Schröder-Devrient"; in a vain attempt to rescue it he missed his footing, and narrowly escaped a ducking. Presently, however, while making the tour of Greenwich Hospital itself, he espied a pensioner taking snuff, and exclaimed to Minna: "If I could only speak English, I'd ask for a pinch." To his intense surprise the pensioner held out his box, saying that he was a Saxon and delighted to hear his native dialect once more. With his usual elaboration the same authority also tells us of a visit to Westminster Abbey, when Wagner stood plunged in thought before the monument to Shakespeare in Poets' Corner, and Minna roused him from his reverie by a pluck at the sleeve and a business-like "Come, dear Richard, you have been standing here for twenty minutes like one of these statues, and not uttered a word." Beyond these trifling anecdotes, too harmless to be worth disputing, there is nothing more on record concerning the master's first sojourn in our huge metropolis.

After this well-earned rest he took the packet for Boulogne-sur-mer, somewhat lightened in pocket by his London stay. In a humorous article styled "Parisian Fatalities" (1841) he makes an imaginary German describe the disappointment of his hopes of finding France less costly. Of course we must not take this

* Julius Cyriax, long Hon. Treasurer and Secretary of the Wagner Society of London, and one of the master's most genial and enthusiastic friends. He died, alas! quite suddenly in 1892.

as a piece of unadulterated autobiography, but the experience would in the main be Wagner's own. "My evil star would have it that I should tread the soil of France for the first time at Boulogne-sur-mer. I had come from England, indeed from London, and breathed again as I touched the land of francs, i.e. of twenty-sous pieces, leaving well behind the dreadful land of pounds and shillings; for I had calculated that I could live at least twice as cheaply in France, having regard to the relative numbers of sous and pence, of which latter there only went twelve to the handsomest shilling, whereas the least presentable of francs yet holds its twenty sous." He carries the fancy still farther, working it out into centimes, "during the passage on the steamboat, in fact," and building all kinds of castles in the air; but "gruesome habits of the French, how have ye nullified my splendid plans!—Arrived at the hotel, I at once was asked: *Pardon, monsieur vous êtes Anglais?* The voyage had so benumbed my brain, that for the moment I really could not quite remember what country's child I was, and deemed it shortest to end my inward confusion by a hasty *Oui!*" That "Oui!" wrecked everything: "Relying on French cheapness, I had stayed two days in the hotel; an excellent garçon had served me with especial reverence and attention. I had not been wrong, when I ascribed this obsequious service to the respect the creature cherished for my quality of Englishman; of this I was positive when I observed his sudden change of manner after overhearing one of my frequent soliloquies in my mother-tongue." The waiter became "my brother. . . . Unfortunately this change of estimate had not come equally to pass in the cloudy mind of mine host. He seemed to have punctiliously stuck to my *Oui!* when he made up the reckoning for his hapless hospitality. To oblige me, he had written out this bill in English; certain inexplicably large figures upon it made me think there was some mistake, and that they were intended for another person, presumably a genuine Briton. But the host soon helped me out of doubt, and confirmed me in the true belief. The items were correct; my paradise was lost for aye, the soundness of my centime system done to death" (*P. W.* VIII. 89-92).

At dear Boulogne our pair of travellers, of course with dog, spent no less than a month; but it was neither the famous sea-bathing, nor the sights of the place, that detained them,—simply

the presence of one personage, acquaintance with whom was at that time a matter of moment to the young operatist. Immediately upon his arrival he had learnt that, among its other guests, the place was harbouring MEYERBEER. To him it must have seemed a special providence, thus directly on his entry into France to light upon the renowned composer of *Robert* and the *Huguenots*. What might not the recommendations of this influential maëstro accomplish for his capture of the foreign stronghold! "I made him acquainted with the two completed acts of my 'Rienzi'; in the friendliest manner he promised me his support in Paris," says Wagner in the *Autobiographic Sketch* of 1842. Meanwhile he had found a means of reducing his expenditure: "Instead of lodging in Boulogne itself, he hired an apartment in its country environs; living was cheaper there, and he could work in unbroken quiet," as his friend Gasperini tells us. "Often have I heard him speak of those days of privation, but never with bitterness. He had such faith in himself, such a fund of youthful energy; he believed himself so near the goal; he was so certain that Paris would soon repay him for all his trials."

September 12 the instrumentation of the second act of *Rienzi* was finished. Meyerbeer's interest in the work appeared sincere; young Wagner's gratitude towards the world-famed man, who lent his aims such kindly recognition, was undissembled. This is proved by countless utterances of the period; warm-hearted and resilient confidence, in spite of all the strain it was put to, breathes from his every letter of this period to his mostly absent patron. That the unknown and impecunious German could not have the remotest prospect of getting his operas on to the Paris stage, was manifestly plainer to the worldly-wise composer than to his younger confrère. On his departure about the middle of September, Meyerbeer gave him a number of letters of introduction to leading Parisians: to Anténor Joly, director of the Renaissance theatre; to the director of the Grand Opéra; to Habeneck, to music-publisher Schlesinger, even to his *alter ego* and most trusty catspaw, Post-secretary Gouin. The pulling of the diplomatic strings of Parisian art was indeed this memorable man's peculiar forte, and his net was spread over the most distant circles of Europe itself; he held, in fact, a "chancellerie" of his own, prepared to swell the chorus of *réclame* from the faintest whisper of preliminary gossip to the many-throated shout

of acclamation of a work produced. Little as Wagner then knew of the devious windings of this labyrinth, the more must he have valued the declared intention to back him up; the more heartfelt must have been his thanks, the more encouraging his hopes, and —the crueler his undeception.

The last stage of his audacious journey lay before him, when he boarded the Boulogne diligence for Paris from his modest lodgings by the highway; every milestone passed brought him nearer to the Parnassus of all Europe, the "city full of endlessness and gloss and dirt."

Those who know only the Paris of the Second Empire and Third Republic, have but little notion of the physiognomy the town presented to our young invader. It was not till Hausmann's prefecture of the Seine that a spacious thoroughfare was pierced through one of the worst-built and thickest-populated quarters of the city, from the Tuileries to the Bastille, the Louvre united with the Tuileries, the Place des Carrousels levelled and laid out, the main Boulevards extended to the Madeleine, the Champs Elysées planted with shrubs and relieved with fountains, the Palais de l'Industrie erected, the Bois de Boulogne converted into a pleasure-park and embellished with a wide expanse of water. Where broad symmetric streets and boulevards now alternate with well-kept open spaces decked with flowers, at that period we should have found dark and dingy haunts standing cheek by jowl with the Palais Royal, the Tuileries and uncompleted Louvre; sheds and jugglers' booths and punch-and-judy-boxes wedged in between the two palaces; the glory of the Elysées unkempt and badly lighted; a maze of filthy passages and tumble-down houses around the stateliness of Notre Dame; the cut-throat slums of the Cité, the airless, lightless alleys of the Quartier Latin, the hovels of a rookery on the Place Cambrai, a dusty desert of a Bois de Boulogne, a hideous wilderness of drinking-dens around the Arc de Triomphe, and many another spot a stranger would scarcely dare to pass at night. At a like abomination in the old Quartier des Halles, No. 23 Rue de la Tonnellerie, did the young master, his wife and the big dog, reap their first experience of the chameleon city; it was a *hôtel garni* of almost the lowest rank,—in this street there were none superior. The forbidding house had but one distinction, a bust of Molière above the entrance, denoting it the poet's birthplace. Together

with its whole setting of malodorous courts and alleys, the house has now been demolished, to make way for the Rue du Pont-neuf, No. 31 whereof is decorated with a memorial tablet.

"Eh! I knew it well, the fusty old Rue de la Tonnellerie," says a former dweller in this quarter, Ernst Pasqué (*Nord und Süd*, 1884), "with its whole environment to match: the Rue de la Fromagerie, de la petite Friperie, du Marché aux Poires, and whatever else they then were called! It was a narrow, dirty, gloomy passage, uniting the Rue Saint Honoré with the Halles; short enough, but hedged by houses of five and six storeys apiece, which, old and tottering, with their pitch-dark courts and frowsy little shops, made the reverse of an inviting impression. The whole quarter had been left exactly as it was some 50 or 60 years before, and offered a speaking portrait of the Paris of the previous century. Only as a rare event did a ray of sunshine strike these alleys that were scarcely ever free from mud, and never from vegetable refuse. For at midnight the maraîchers of the surrounding district began their inroad, bringing produce to the Halles and Marché des Innocents, thundering down the Rue de la Tonnellerie with raucous oaths, to pile their cabbages and cauliflowers in pyramids against the gable-walls, almost up to the second storey. By night and day the noise was deafening, and the Rue de la Tonnellerie always reeked with the smell of vegetables, fruit, and cheese."

Such was the external scenery of Richard Wagner's first advent to Paris, for the musical conquest of which he had journeyed all the way from Russia. This was the Paris hitherto represented in his fancy by its palaces and theatres, its Notre Dame and Place de Grève, its Boulevards, Faubourgs and other grand things; the Paris that moved all Europe by its operas and revolutions, eh! at times turned one into the other,—and wherein he now set foot "with very little money, but the best of hopes."

IX.

FIRST PARISIAN DISAPPOINTMENTS.

Introductions.—Meeting with Laube; dinner at Brocci's; Heinrich Heine.—Pecht, Kietz, Anders, Lehrs.—Grand Opéra and Théâtre des Italiens.—Conservatoire de Musique: Ninth Symphony.—Scribe and Berlioz.—Composition of French romances.—Fortunes of the "Liebesverbot" at the Renaissance theatre.—A "Faust" overture.—Removal to Rue du Helder.—Bankruptcy of the Renaissance.

> *"I am poor; in a few weeks, in fact, without a sou. But what of that? I have been told that I have talent;—was I to choose* Tunis *as the place for pushing it? No; I have come to* Paris, *the hub of the world, where artists of every race find recognition. Here I shall soon discover if folk deceived me when they credited me with talent, or if I really own any."*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER (*An End in Paris*).

THERE is only one thing to compare with this first visit of Wagner's to Paris: that of Luther to Rome. In both cases the undeception of a trusting German idealist became the fulcrum of a Reformation. Wagner had brought with him as whole a faith in the "hub of the world, where the arts of every nation stream together to one focus," as the poor Augustine monk in the earthly centre of the Church, the holiness of Peter's-throne. He was prepared for many a rebuff, many a self-denial, in his honourable ambition; but his lively fancy limned the forum of Grand Opera with so many points of likeness to his own ideal, that he confidently reckoned upon finding here an honest verdict on the value of his art. Experience soon demolished that belief, and changed his views in more than one direction. "I entered a new path, that of *revolution against our modern Public Art*,—with whose conditions I had erewhile striven to comply,—when I looked upon

its glittering crest in Paris" (*P. W.* I. 303). His grievous disillusionments were thus to pave the inner way for the Reformer.

Gasperini sketches the outward course of these experiences with a few drastic strokes: "At Meyerbeer's bidding every door flew open to him: the director of the Grand Opéra extends his arms, Schlesinger offers him a thousand services, Habeneck receives him as an equal; in short, for one brief month Wagner returns each evening to his rooms in the Rue de la Tonnellerie delighted alike with Paris and the Parisians, astonished at the welcome tendered him, touched by the civilities wherewith he is heaped. His goal seems near, nay, all but reached. Next month his fever of elation cools: he fancies he observes that the Director is somewhat more constrained in his allusions to his opera, that he visibly draws back from naming any definite day of audience and merely doubles his cajoleries, the better to avoid a binding promise. With German punctuality he keeps all his appointments, only to find that the other party has forgotten to make an appearance; everywhere he encounters people who multiply the politeness of their assurances in measure as they mean to shake him off. One fine day he comes to the conclusion that he is on the wrong road, and all this civility is no more than a mask. Ere long, no further doubt is possible; he is lonelier, more forsaken than ever, farther removed from the imagined fortune than on the first day of his arrival in Paris."

Exaggerated though the opening of this statement, it is upon something similar that Wagner's own subsequent reflection would appear to rest: "It has frequently been found difficult for a Frenchman to remember of his own accord a promise given; but he turns furious if we remind him of it" (*P. W.* V. 52). Perhaps we may discover a more lenient explanation in the words of Rousseau regarding his own first entry into the great world of Paris: "Je fus bientôt désabusé de tout ce grand intérêt qu'on avait paru prendre à moi. Il faut pourtant rendre justice aux Français: ils ne s'épuisent point autant qu'on dit en protestations, et celles qu'ils font sont presque toujours sincères; mais ils ont une manière de paraître s'intéresser pour vous qui trompe plus que des paroles: on croirait qu'ils ne vous disent pas tout ce qu'ils veulent faire, pour vous surprendre plus agréablement. Je dirai plus: ils ne sont point faux dans leurs démonstrations; ils ont en

effet le sentiment qu'ils vous témoignent : en vous parlant ils sont pleins de vous ; ne vous voient-ils plus, ils vous oblient ; tout est chez eux l'œuvre du moment" (*Confessions*, Book 4).

In any case, the epistolary advices of the grand monarch of French Opera by no means produced so magical an effect as that described above. For the most part they fell quite flat: from the first our hero met with nothing but a cold politeness, which gave rise in fact to the ancient legend, current among Wagner's Paris friends, of a double file of correspondence,—Meyerbeer being supposed to have anticipated every letter in which he describes the young German musician as of eminent gifts by another in which he pooh-poohs him as incompetent, and apologises for his recommendation by explaining that it was the only way to get rid of him. Be that as it may, the mighty maëstro soon appeared in person, on a flying visit, and *seemed* to be doing whatever he could for the aims of his protégé, thrusting him upon Anténor Joly, director of the ill-starred Théâtre de la Renaissance, and making him acquainted with other magnates of the Paris world of art. More was not feasible for the moment, and of course the Grand Opéra was out of the question as yet.

To turn to a pleasanter quarter, an agreeable surprise was in store for Wagner: discovery of the presence of his old friend Heinrich Laube, who at last had realised his contemplated trip to Paris, though no longer with Saint-Simonistic objects. He had married in the same year as Wagner (1836), and since had travelled through Algiers and France to cull material for certain literary products, to the polishing of which he now proposed to devote a winter in Paris. With this end he had taken lodgings on the Boulevard des Italiens,—an extraordinary luxury for a German author in those days. "Strange fortunes had removed friend Wagner from my sight awhile, and I was no little astonished to see him suddenly enter my study in Paris," says Laube in the *Ztg. f. d. elegante Welt* (No. 6, 1843). "His inexhaustibly productive nature, unceasingly impelled and prompted by a lively fancy, had always interested me ; and I had always hoped that most excellent modern music would issue from a personality so filled with the culture of our day." This call must have been paid very soon after Wagner's arrival in Paris, for in October we find Laube introducing him to a fresh acquaintance, Friedrich

Pecht, afterwards a well-known painter and writer on art, but at that time studying under Delaroche.

In course of a widely-interesting reminiscence (*Allg. Ztg.* March 22, 1883) Pecht tells us of a visit to the picture-galleries in the Louvre:—"As soon as I met Laube in the Salon Carré he said, 'I'm going to introduce you to some compatriots, a younger brother of our cousin and your friend Frau Friedrich Brockhaus,* lately Kapellmeister at Riga, but just arrived here with his wife. You both intend to seek your fortune here, for *he* is trying to get an opera performed.' Before long a youthful pair advanced to Laube, and the strikingly distinguished-looking man, well-favoured and attractive into the bargain, was presented to me as 'Herr Richard Wagner.' His features then shewed nothing of that sternness which forty years of combat stamped upon them later; on the contrary, a something soft, for all their marked intelligence and animation. Manifestly distracted and occupied with quite other things than Rubens and Paolo Veronese, whose pictures I was expounding with all the enthusiasm of a warm admirer, Wagner pleased me very well, but made no deep impression on me: he looked decidedly too neat and nice. There was a certain shimmer of refinement about his whole appearance. To be sure, something *unapproachable* as well, that might have struck a more careful observer, but to which we were much less accustomed then in German geniuses than nowadays." Minna also comes in for Pecht's first impressions: one would not have remarked in this pretty creature either the late actress, or the artist at all; rather, a kind-hearted little woman, sober and without élan, devoted to her husband with all her soul, following him everywhere with bowed head; but without the faintest notion of his genius, and, for all her love and loyalty, so fond of middle-class respectability that she formed his fundamental opposite. "Wagner's absent-mindedness at this first encounter," continues Pecht, "was only too explainable, as he had arrived in the foreign capital without resources, not even thorough master of the language, and at his wits' end what to do; a fact he no longer concealed from us as our acquaintance wore on."

Laube constituted the immediate link in this closer bond:

* This relationship was based on Laube's marriage with the charming Iduna Budäus, member of a family whose branches were connected with all the Leipzig set of merchant-scholars.

"Good comrade that Laube always was, he soon introduced us to Heine. The occasion was a dinner in common at Brocci's, a famous Italian restaurant in the Rue Lepelletier, opposite the Grand Opéra. Heine brought his wife, in those days entrancingly beautiful, merry and naïve as a child; she was a feast for the eyes of us all, and even put the beauty of Frau Wagner in the shade. Laube was just the man to prick Heine from the blasé indifference of his first greeting; the graceful tact of Iduna Laube did the rest, and drew him to a perfect shower of witty rejoinders, —which he generally appeared to have studiously prepared beforehand. Under the hail of meteors Wagner also thawed out of silence, and displayed that curious elasticity of his, that rarest faculty of complete detachment from the cares and worries of his daily life. He had the knack of telling a good tale, the sharpest eye for comic relief, the keenest ear for the accents of nature, and the surest taste for everything fine in the plastic arts as well.* As he had just made a hazardous voyage from Riga in a tiny sailing-vessel, driven out of his course up the coast of Norway, the story of that adventure soon held us all." Laube adds the further touch of "Heine, else so immovable, folding his hands in pious horror at this assurance of a German's." The conversation taking a turn towards the literary and political condition of the fatherland, with a few biting strictures by no means expressed in a whisper, "Heine suddenly bethought him that, in our treasonable conclave, we really ought to have a little care as to who might be sitting near us. Taking the hint, I strained my ear to the crowded room, and made the alarming discovery that German was being spoken at every table, whilst our own had become the object of marked and general attention. That put an end to Brocci's; but our dinners were resumed now here, now there, and belong to my most interesting Paris recollections."

It seems doubtful whether Heine was again a partner in these little dinners, but Wagner met him now and then, and even paid a visit to his rooms in the Faubourg Poissonière. The writer of

* In confirmation of the last clause, see Dr O. Bie's important study, *Richard Wagner's Verhältniss zur Bildenden Kunst* (Allg. Mus. Ztg. 1892, pp. 85-285); N. A. Harzen-Müller's *Wagner's Beziehungen zu den bildenden Künsten* (Mus. Wochenblatt 1893, Nos. 22-26); and C. F. Glasenapp's *Hauptepochen der bildenden Kunst bei den Griechen, mit Einleitung: Richard Wagner über die bildende Kunst der Griechen* (Riga, W. Mellin, 1890).

the *Reisebilder*, according to Laube, was at that time more like an Abbé of the eighteenth century, with his portly frame and unctuous humour. His outward circumstances were comfortably flourishing, and formed a vivid contrast to those of the poor German musician. Not that his literary activity, including his regular anonymous political correspondence in the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung*, brought him more than three-thousand francs a-year; but his millionaire Hamburg uncle made him a handsome allowance, and saw that it was paid him punctually. Heine, however, liked good living, and had indulged in some unlucky speculations on the Bourse, which swallowed up the 20,000 fr. paid him by Campe in 1837 for eleven years' copyright of his works. So the "German poet"—and worse, the political journalist—had taken the fatal step of accepting secret-service money from the French Government. For eleven years, until the fall of Guizot, he drew a salary from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which he euphemised as "the alms given by the French nation to many thousands of foreigners who had compromised themselves at home by their zeal for the cause of Revolution." * Such a man can never have been on very friendly terms with Wagner, and almost the only remark attributed to him, in this connection, is that recorded by Th. Hagen: "Do you know what makes me suspicious of this talent? That it was recommended by *Meyerbeer*." He knew only too well that the mainstay of Grand Opera would never support a rival in Paris who might prove at all dangerous. Beyond that, he cherished a peculiar dislike for his famous congener, a dislike usually reserved for those who had wounded his personal vanity, and was very fond of playing off his wit on him in conversation;

* Eugen Wolff: *Briefe von Heinrich Heine an Heinrich Laube*, Breslau, Schottländer 1893, p. 42.—The author and diplomatist E. Grenier, whom Heine familiarly nicknamed "the little French Goethe," was induced to translate a portion of this political Correspondence into French, for Heine to shew it, as Grenier tells us, "to the Princess Belgiojoso, whom I had seen and much admired at the races in the Champs de Mars. Later, a good deal later, he disclosed to me for *whom* I had translated those articles from the *Augsburg Allgemeine*: it was not for the fine eyes of the Princess—those great cruel eyes, as Musset calls them,—but for those of M. Guizot. Heine received 6000 fr. a year from the secret-service fund, and had to shew the minister from time to time that he had earned it; hence, apparently, he got me to translate the articles that were especially favourable to France. For that matter, my labour was unrepaid, as Heine never introduced me to the Princess after all" (E. Grenier, in the *Revue Bleue* 1892).

for instance when he discounted the canard that Post-secretary Gouin had composed the whole of Meyerbeer's operas, suggesting that "possibly Gouin had really written nothing more than the fourth act of the Huguenots."*

Pecht goes on to tell of the young Germans in whose company he now met Wagner frequently. "There was a fellow-Dresdener, the talented portrait-painter Ernst Kietz, who soon afterwards drew a capital portrait of Wagner. He was a pupil of Delaroche's, like myself, and particularly amused us by his obstinate adherence to the infinitive for every French verb. Presently he brought a learned friend with him, a political refugee who held a small post in the Paris Library and called himself 'Anders,' but whose proper name we never discovered. As Wagner put it, we had all 'taken the vow of chastity and poverty,' and, with the best of will, could lend him small assistance."

To these we may add the philologist Lehrs referred-to by Wagner in a letter to Uhlig of October 1852 as "one of my dearest friends in Paris, who came to grief because he could not take a holiday to attend to his cure"—a warning only too sadly verified in Uhlig's own case a few months thereafter. This Lehrs was the *only* Hebrew in Wagner's intimate Paris circle; his original distinctive name was Samuel, but he had changed it to Siegfried upon becoming a Christian. Author of various erudite treatises, his great work on Nicander and Oppian is mentioned in Didot's *Bibliothèque Grecque.* Lehrs died of consumption in April 1843, just a year after Wagner left Paris, and there can be no doubt that F. Praeger, with his easily-explicable passion for scenting out a "constant close intimacy of Wagner with the descendants of Judah," has turned him into the apocryphal "Louis" whose surname he is "unable to recall," but whose existence is vouched for by no *authority*,—the similarity in the appearance of the names, if badly written, would amply account for the transfer, in view of that pseudo-biographer's indubitably failing powers and general tendency to muddle.

Twelve years afterwards Wagner gives a thumb-nail sketch of this earliest Paris period. "The half-finished 'Rienzi' I laid at first upon one side, and busied myself in every way to make myself known in the world's metropolis. But I lacked the

* See Appendix.

necessary personal qualifications; I had scarcely learnt even the French tongue, instinctively distasteful to me, sufficiently for the most ordinary needs of everyday. Not in the remotest degree did I feel tempted to assimilate the Frenchman's nature, though I flattered myself with the hope of appealing to it in *my own* way; I confided in music, as a cosmopolitan language, to fill that gulf between my own and the Parisian character to which my inner feeling could not be blind" (*P. W.* I. 301). Unluckily his confidence in music was misplaced: he could not play the piano well enough to give strangers a clear idea of his compositions, and the only wonder is that he made any headway at all; as Pecht says, "it can only be attributed to the magic of his temperament, his bubbling vitality and winning presence, together with his enormous force of will, that he got so far as to make people even listen to him."

His worst disillusionment was of an impersonal nature. He had come to Paris with an exaggerated estimate of the art-institute that ruled all Europe at that time. True, this Grand Opéra, so long the goal of his desires, still drew him as a magnet for awhile; but he very soon discovered that its wealth of precious means was squandered on a wholly spurious genre, a prey to virtuosity and brainless mannerism. The actual performances at this grand bazaar left him chilled to the bone by their want of any vital spark. He found the whole thing "commonplace and middling," and, in all the Académie Royale de Musique, what pleased him best was the care bestowed on the mise-en-scène and decorations. "Those who had only seen Halévy's *Juive* in Germany," he says in his *Parisian Amusements* (1841), "assuredly could never divine how it came to amuse the Parisians. The riddle is solved at once, when one sees the Paris curtain rise. Where we in Germany took fire at the powerful features of the composition, the Parisian has quite other fish to fry. For what a length of time have the French machinist and scene-painter known to strain and feed the curiosity of the opera-goer! Verily, he who sees this inscenation, needs long and careful scrutiny before he can exhaust the thousand details of the mounting. Who can take in the rare and lavish costumes at a glance? Who can grasp at once the mystic meaning of the ballets?—But indeed it needs all these attractions, to disclose to the Parisians the intrinsic value of an original

work; for I tell you again, before all else they ask to be amused, —by hook or crook amused" (*P. W.* VIII. 78). This outward splendour of the performances at the Grand Opéra—which he "did not attend very often"—would send a pleasurable warmth into his brain, and kindle the desire, the hope, to triumph there one day himself; but when he turned from the showy form to its contents, he was filled by reflections such as we have seen in his comparison between the Paris and the Dresden chorus.

And what had the other subventioned lyric theatres, the Théâtre des Italiens, the Opéra Comique, the Odéon, to shew him? If there lingered one vestige of his earlier "easy-going" views, it was finally expunged by the Italian singers and their perfumed audience. The critical lash he wields on a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* by wooden and voiceless heroes and heroines of the Italian Opera, Rubini, Tamburini, Persiani, and other of the public's pets, proves how little satisfaction was here for him to reap. The Opéra Comique might have pleased him more, as he says in his *Autobiographic Sketch*, for "it possesses the best talents, and its performances offer an ensemble, an individuality, such as we should seek in vain in Germany." Even in *Opera and Drama* (1850) he refers with approbation to the "entertaining, often delightfully witty genre" peculiar to this establishment. But already in 1842 he has to deplore the degradation that has seized this stage: "Whither have flown the grace of Méhul, Isouard, Boieldieu, and *young* Auber,* scared by the contemptible quadrille rhythms which rattle through this theatre to-day?" (*P. W.* I. 16).

Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that, in his present doubtful situation, there was not a something in Wagner's mind resisting full and prompt acknowledgment of the hollowness of all he saw around. This something, as he tells us, was a "readiness to warm myself at any of that art-world's *ignes fatui* which shewed the least resemblance to my goal: their sickly unsub-

* With regard to his recent output, the *Domino noir*, *Diamants de la Couronne* etc., Wagner remarks in 1841 that "opera-composing has become as much of a habit to Auber, as lathering to a barber. But the great master often stops at lathering now, and sometimes at bare soap-sudding. His fine keen razor, bright though its blade, one feels but seldom," etc., etc. (*P. W.* VIII. 125).

stantiality was mantled with a glittering show, such as I had never seen before. It was only later, that I became conscious how grossly I had deceived myself in this respect through an almost artificial state of nervous excitation. That gratuitous excitement, mounting glibly to the verge of transport, was nourished, unawares to myself, by the feeling of my outward lot—which I must have recognised as *completely hopeless* if I had suddenly admitted to myself that all this artistic tinsel, that made up the world in which I was struggling to get on, was inwardly an object of my deepest scorn. My outward straits compelled me to hold that admission aloof, and I was able to do it with the ready placability of a man and artist whom an instinctive need of love lets see in every smiling semblance the object of his search" (*P. W.* I. 302).

The solitary oasis in this desert was the old tumble-down house in the Rue Bergère tenanted by the Conservatoire de Musique. Its modest placards were almost lost in the mass of theatrical posters and flamboyant puffs of other concerts; its hall was perhaps the poorest in gilding and such-like allurements—a crying contrast to the Salles Vivienne and Musard. And yet it was here that Wagner gained an impression of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony such as he had never experienced at the Gewandhaus concerts in his birthplace, and which stayed graven on his memory his whole life through. Over and over again does he recall it: "it was as if scales had fallen from my eyes," he tells us in 1869, "for in every bar the orchestra had learnt to recognise the Beethovenian *melody*. The orchestra *sang* that melody. That was the secret." He goes on to recount how Habeneck had rehearsed this symphony for one whole winter "without feeling anything beyond its incomprehensibility and ineffectiveness," and how that had moved him to rehearse it yet a second and a third year through, till at last the "novel Beethovenian melos" had dawned on every member of his band. "But Habeneck," he adds, "was at least a conductor of the good old stamp: he was master, and all his men obeyed him" (*P. W.* IV. 301). Thus had the orchestral director of the Conservatoire developed into a pioneer of the "noblest conquest of the German genius," against the full weight of a name such as that of Fétis, who had accused Beethoven of unnaturalness, extravagance, and striving for effect. And now, however little the beau-monde may have

relished the change, the works of Beethoven had become "the mode" in Paris, not a concert taking place without at least his *name* upon the programme. For all that, Wagner closes his earlier remarks on the Paris Conservatoire with the words: "These concerts stand alone, in utter solitude; they have influenced nothing."

Among the various interviews of his first year in Paris we have a visit to Eugène SCRIBE, apparently in prosecution of that infructuous correspondence of some time before. In his *Parisian Amusements* (1841) Wagner draws a humorous picture of this typical Parisian playwright and his countless avocations. "He is the epitome of the art of amusing, and has gained the most astounding credit for the establishment over which he presides with such exemplary diligence. That establishment is the whole of the Parisian theatres. In this household he receives all Paris every night, and has the knack of entertaining all as each desires. . . . Would you not expect him to be quite prostrate next day? —Go visit him at ten o'clock in the morning, and you'll be astonished.—You behold him in an elegant silk dressing-gown, over a cup of chocolate. He certainly requires the light refreshment; this very instant he has left his desk, where for two whole hours he has been flogging his hippogryph through that romantic wonderland which smiles upon you from the great poet's works. But think you he is really resting, with that chocolate? Look round, and you'll observe that every corner of the charming room, each chair, divan and sofa, is filled by a Parisian author or composer. With every one of these gentlemen he is engaged on weighty business, such as would not brook a moment's interruption in the case of other people; with every one of them he is hatching the plot for a drama, an opera, a comedy or vaudeville; with every one of them he is devising a brand-new intrigue. . . . Moreover he is busied at the same time with a pile of well-turned *billets* to this and that client, polishing off this or that applicant by word of mouth, and paying 500 fr. for a puppy. But amid it all he gathers matter for his coming pieces, studies with a fleeting smile the character of strangers just announced or done with, sets them in a frame, and in fifteen minutes makes a play of which no one as yet knows a word. I rather fancy I myself one day became a subject for him in this fashion, and shall be much surprised if we don't soon see a piece in which my plaintive wonder at the

costly purchase of the puppy becomes the pivot of a telling situation" (*P. W.* VIII. 80-81).

His introductions to Habeneck, Halévy, Berlioz etc., led to nothing: "in Paris no artist has the time to strike up friendship with another, for each is in a red-hot hurry for his own advantage." Among them Hector BERLIOZ, in spite of his stand-offishness, attracted him the most: "he differs by the breadth of heaven from his Parisian colleagues, since he makes no music for money. Yet he cannot write for pure art; he lacks all sense of beauty." Wagner found him absolutely isolated, "with nothing but a troop of devotees around him, shallow persons without a spark of judgment, who greet him as the founder of a brand-new musical system and completely turn his head*—while the rest of the world avoids him as a madman." The German musician heard the first performance of the *Romeo and Juliet* Symphony in November, 1839, and thus expresses himself concerning it a year and a half later: "It filled me with regret. Amid the most brilliant inventions, this work is heaped with such a mass of solecisms that I could not repress the wish that Berlioz had shewn it before performance to some such man as Cherubini, who, without doing its originality the slightest injury, would certainly have had the wit to rid it of a quantity of disfigurements. With Berlioz' excessive sensitiveness, however, even his most intimate friend would never dare a like proposal" (*P. W.* VIII. 134).

Wagner's opinion of Berlioz' music never changed, nor will its justice in the main be disputed by the most generous critic to-

* Compare Stephen Heller in the *Allg. Musikzeitung* 1894 (p. 88): "Even in 1838, the year I first arrived in Paris, Berlioz stood quite apart among the artists there. He was misunderstood, true enough; but after the fashion of a man who really has something to be misunderstood: he had raised 'misunderstanding' to a cachet; the admiration of a large circle had given it such strident prominence, that it won him fresh friends every day. It was particularly artists in *other* departments that felt attracted, not so much by the music itself, as by its poetical framework, its picturesque programmes. Among these must be numbered many of the best poets and romancers: V. Hugo, Lamartine, Dumas, de Vigny, Balzac, the painters Delacroix and Ary Scheffer. All these wholly unmusical beings, who have the harrowing scenes of their dramas accompanied by a waltz of Strauss (played slow, with mutes and a dash of tremolo), all raved about Berlioz, and displayed their sympathy in word and deed. And then a certain portion of the superiorly elegant world, folk who loved to buy the reputation for free-thinking cheap, incapable of telling a sonata of Diabelli's from one by Beethoven."

day. Nevertheless he prized the artist for his refusal to truckle to the philistines, and deplored that poverty whose pinch he knew too well himself. In one of his Paris articles he jokingly characterises the gift of 20,000 fr., said to have been bestowed on the composer of the *Symphonie Fantastique* by the else so stingy Paganini, as the "wages of Hell" that conjure up Envy for good and deprive the recipient of even the world's *pity*. But Berlioz the *writer* could do without pity: as the intrepid critic of the *Journal des Débats* he made himself feared; and the *écrivain* is always an object of respect to the French,—an experience presently to be reaped by the young master himself, when every road was barred to him as musician.

Let us now inquire how Wagner was occupied, apart from waiting on celebrities, this first Parisian winter. *Rienzi* he had been obliged to lay on one side half-finished, to turn his attention to the wherewithal to gain himself a name more speedily. In *An End in Paris* he makes the hero unfold his plans for conquering the capital, among which we find the composition of ballads and romances in the style of Schubert: "This is a genre that admirably suits my inclination; I feel capable of turning out something worth noticing there. I will get my songs sung, and perhaps may share the good luck which has befallen so many—namely of attracting the attention of some Director of the Opéra who may happen to be present." So he becomes drawing-room composer, and sets music to a French translation of Heine's *Beiden Grenadiere* and two or three French romances—*Mignonne* by Ronsard, *Dors, mon enfant* and *Attente* by Victor Hugo.* But however simple and easy he had striven to keep them, they seem to have been thought too odd and difficult for actual

* For all their ephemeral design, the many points of contact presented by these graceful 'pièces d'occasion' with the master's later creations shew how deeply they were rooted in his inner being. The characteristic rhythm introductory to the Cradle-song is not merely most intimately allied to the Sailors' cry and Spinning-song in the *Flying Dutchman*, but has a psychological resemblance to the wistful close of Senta's ballad, "Ach, wo weilt sie, die dir Gottes Engel einst könne *zeigen?*" Through the plastic feature of the look-out from the watch-tower, the main theme of *Attente* has a strong family-likeness to "Und Kurwenal, wie, du sähst sie nicht?" in *Tristan;* whilst the striking motive of moribund exhaustion in the *Beiden Grenadiere* is plainly related with the "Kein Fleh'n, kein Elend seiner Ritter" of *Parsifal*.

delivery (or even French publication, except the first-named) and had no chance against the sentimental *chansons* of the fashionable drawing-room composer, Loisa Puget, whose name we meet so often in the *Parisian Amusements* etc.

By Meyerbeer's advice he had opened negotiations, in the autumn, with the director of the Théâtre de la Renaissance. The Paris wits declared that no better name could have been chosen for this theatre, as it died three times a year as regular as clockwork, and was as regularly reborn. Anténor Joly was its accoucheur in ordinary, an old hand at pulling through a bankruptcy, and every-time disaster forced him to shut to the scarcely-opened doors of his ill-fated house he cried undauntedly *Mon théâtre est mort, vive mon théâtre!*—Surely the obliging introducer must have known the nature of the quicksands toward which he gaily steered his trusting protégé.

At this Théâtre de la Renaissance the future composer of *Martha* and *Stradella* had just enjoyed his first success, with *Le Naufrage de la Méduse* (composed by Flotow in concert with Pilati, and produced on May 31, 1839). That was clearly the genre for the house, and if Wagner wanted to succeed here, his field was pretty plainly marked. The score of *Das Liebesverbot* seemed just the thing, whilst the "somewhat frivolous subject" would admirably meet the views of this particular audience. After so warm a recommendation, the director could hardly help making the young German the best of promises, and one of the most prolific playwrights of the French metropolis, Dumersan, tame poet to the Théâtre des Variétés, was told off for the translation. To be sure, this recurrence to an earlier work was somewhat galling to a man who already had got so far beyond it; but that sort of consideration must be put in his pocket: it was absolutely necessary to create a stir as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, from the first set-out he had to learn that other people took a very different standpoint: what to him was an object of the keenest hopes and fears, to them was but a trifling matter, to be delayed regardless of the victim's pain. His influential patron had rushed from Paris, and left him to his own devices: no epistolary admonitions from a distance could possibly make up for personal pressure. For two whole months Dumersan kept him waiting for the result of his labours, in spite of all

remonstrance — two months of hardships which in themselves would have sufficed to bring him to the direst straits.

From this miserable interlude there has survived the manuscript of a complete French prose-translation of the *Liebesverbot* in Wagner's hand, with corrections by another (*La Novice de Palerme, Opéra en deux actes*, 59 pages folio). Its origin is not quite manifest: either, impatient of prolonged delay, the young master at last resolved to do the thing himself, notwithstanding his defective French; or it was merely a rough draft, thrown off as guide for Dumersan. The point cannot be settled without careful examination of the handwriting; but, like so many other valuable documents from this period, the manuscript has gone the way of the autograph-hawker, and fallen into undiscoverable hands. Upon the back of its last page, and a part of the title-page, we are told that there exists a touching souvenir, in the form of a sketch for a letter to Meyerbeer: the troubles of this time are so acute, that "they will certainly be sung some day by the best of poets in from 24 to 48 cantos." The meagre excerpts that have found their way into the public press display that humorous self-irony with which the writer was so accustomed to muffle his "perchance distressing cries for help": he has scarcely realised that he is in Paris as yet, he says, but simply vegetated in his lovely Rue de la Tonnellerie—"You may imagine how a sensitive subject, like myself, has behaved in such conditions, how it has gasped for breath and grown most wretched."

It was in this anxious time that came the hearing of that rehearsal under Habeneck of the first three movements of the Ninth Symphony, at the Conservatoire. Besides the æsthetic aspect, already dwelt on, for him it had a subjective, almost a personal import: "I was transported across long years of aberration to the joyful vigils of my youth, when I had spent whole nights in copying out this score, whose very look had plunged me in a mystic reverie. The magic of its hearing now was as a fertiliser to my inner aspirations" (*P. W.* VII. 242). He went forth into the falling night and chilling autumn air; but he had gained fresh light and warmth within. At once he conceived the project of an orchestral piece by far the most important of any of his compositions hitherto. Its rapid sketch, and just as rapid execution, gave him a rallying-point against the depressing influence of his struggles to secure his daily bread. This memorable

work may truly be called a turning-point in Wagner's artistic career. He has styled it an *Overture to Goethe's Faust*; but it was originally intended as the first movement of a grand *Faust-Symphony*, never, alas! completed. On the other side of the sheet of paper which bears its earliest sketch there is to be found a fragment of a French chansonette,*—characteristic enough of the author's vicissitudes in Paris. While at work upon this "overture" in a cold and draughty garret (shared with his wife and the big Newfoundland dog), to add to all his other worries, he was plagued with excruciating toothache: but his spirits were not to be damped by any mundane evils. In the midst of composition he is surprised by a visitor: Berlioz walks into Wagner's room, and finds him using the *Traité d'Instrumentation* (?) as a support for his hand while writing; Wagner rises to greet his guest, and at once turns the coincidence into a neat little compliment, for which Berlioz embraces him effusively.†

Amid his untold cares and humiliations, the young master had *one* source of unfailing relief, a secret closely guarded from the world. His keenly sensitive and easily inflammable nature made him feel every sting with a double smart; but it also offered him a means of palliation. The secret was—the man of steel could *weep*. The hot floods of tears of his infancy never failed him in the sorest trials of his manhood, though his friends were not permitted to be witnesses, still less his foes. "Let me be cursed if an enemy ever hears me moan: in his regard we must be bold as brass and hard as stone," he writes to Uhlig twelve years later. Laughter and tears are classed by the philosopher as the characteristic distinction between man and the beasts, and, perhaps

* It remained among the master's papers down to 1864, when he wrote across it "Famoses Blatt" and gave it to Hans von Bülow, from whose possession it passed into Oesterlein's Wagner-Museum.

† According to Comte Louis Fourcaud in the *Bayr. Festblätter* 1884, who gives the anecdote on the authority of a conversation with the master himself. In the *Bayr. Blätter*, 1894, J. van Santen-Kolff points out that Berlioz' *Traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration moderne* did not appear till 1844. However, the *Gazette Musicale* of Nov. 21, 1841, contains the first instalment of a series of articles by Berlioz, *De l'Instrumentation*: so that the anecdote may in reality refer to the *Flying Dutchman* overture; or, on the other hand, we may easily connect it with some earlier article of Berlioz' in that journal, to which he was a constant contributor,—it would be so much more probable that Wagner should have used something thin, like the Gazette, as a protection to the paper he was writing on, than a book to elevate his wrist.—W. A. E.

for that very reason, are the peculiar appanage of genius. Schopenhauer has it that we never weep on the immediate receipt of pain, be it even bodily, but solely on its repetition in our memory; so that weeping may be called an act of *pity for oneself**—compare the everyday expression, "sorry for himself." Now, the higher the faculty of recalling sensations, combined with the gift of imagination, the more intense will be the power of looking at oneself as another person, an "outsider," and *pitying* in one's own misfortunes the object of mischances common to the human race. In this way the relief derived from tears would fall into the same category as that afforded by a charitable action; and it is certain that, where not due to mere hysteria, the man to whose eyes tears come unbidden will invariably be found of a highly "sympathetic" nature.

Wagner's *Faust*-overture may thus be termed the crystallisation of self-pitying tears called up by the Ninth Symphony. In his "programme" of that Symphony in 1846 he quotes from Goethe's *Faust* two mottoes for the first movement, namely

Entbehren sollst du! Sollst entbehren	Go wanting shalt thou; shalt go wanting.

and

Nur mit Entsetzen wach'ich Morgens auf,	Grim terror greets me as I wake at morn,
Ich möchte bitt're Thränen weinen,	With bitter tears the light I shun
Den Tag zu seh'n, der mir in seinem Lauf	Of yet another day whose course forlorn
Nicht einen Wunsch erfüllen wird, nicht Einen.	Shall not fulfil one wish, not one.

His own *Faust*-overture he prefaces with the motto:

Der Gott der mir im Busen wohnt,	The god that dwells within my breast
Kann tief mein Innerstes erregen;	Can stir the inmost of my being,
Der über allen meinen Kräften thront,	Holds all my powers at his behest,
Er kann nach aussen nichts bewegen:	Yet naught without marks his decreeing:
Und so ist mir das Dasein eine Last,	And so my whole existence is awry,
Der Tod erwünscht, das Leben mir verhasst.	Life hateful, and my one desire to die.

The connection between stimulus and reflex action is here quite

* *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* I. 445-46.

obvious. Richard Wagner's Faust is the man aweary of life, yet ever forced by his indwelling dæmon to engage anew in life's endeavours. With the first bar we see him as if awaking to the light of "yet another day," and gazing round upon the grey expanse of emptiness, wherefrom the sorrows of existence leap to view in a curt ascending motive; after many a struggle a soft ideal rises in the turbulent soul; again we have renewal of the combat, with still greater violence, as tho' a world itself had sprung to arms against the hero; the ideal triumphs for another while, but fades away as night descends, and leaves us with a question all unanswered. In November 1852, when Wagner was contemplating a revision of the score, he writes to Liszt: "You caught me nicely in the lie of trying to delude myself that I had written an 'Overture to *Faust*.' You have felt quite rightly what is lacking: it is the woman. Perhaps you would understand at once, if I called my tone-poem *Faust in solitude*. At that time I intended to write an entire Faust-Symphony; the first movement, that which is completed, was this 'solitary Faust,' longing, despairing, cursing. The 'womanly' hovers before him as an object of longing, not as a divine reality, and it is just this unsatisfying image of his longing that he destroys in his despair. The second movement was to have introduced Gretchen, the woman. I had a theme for her, but it was merely a theme. The work remained unfinished. I wrote my *Flying Dutchman* instead." At the beginning of 1855, when he had at length undertaken its re-scoring, he writes again to Liszt, emphasising once more this *solitude* of Faust's: "All I have been able to do, is to develop the sentiment a little more broadly, in a kind of expanded cadenza. Gretchen of course could not be introduced, only Faust himself: 'A fathomless enraptured yearning drove me through fields and woods afar,' etc."

In days gone by, when Richard Wagner was pretty frequently denied the title of *musician*, it was a common occurrence to be told that he didn't write Symphonies because he *couldn't*. Let anyone attend a performance of this marvellous "overture"—a worthy pendant to Leonora No. 3,—consider its original destination, then ask himself if any musician save Beethoven has ever written the first movement of a Symphony to equal it. It is true that the work, as we hear it to-day, has been "refined" by the author's later experience, as he himself confesses; but the ground-

work and main features remain the same as in 1839-40. Who then shall say that in the Wagner of six-and-twenty there was not the making of a King of Symphonists, had he not felt that a grander sovereignty awaited him?

Despite assertions to the contrary, this fragment of a Faust epic was not performed in Paris at the time; whether it was that the young artist desired to wait for its production as a *whole*, or that he deemed it inexpedient to make his bow before the Paris public with a work so much above its head. The opportunity offering, a month or two later, of having an orchestral work played over by the band of the Conservatoire, Wagner returned once more to his Magdeburg portfolio, and drew forth the *Columbus* overture, the 'parts' of which he had brought with him. In the *Revue et Gazette Musicale* of March 22, 1840, we accordingly read: "Une ouverture d'un jeune compositeur allemand d'un talent très remarquable, M. Wagner, vient d'être répétée par l'orchestre du Conservatoire, et a obtenu des applaudissements unanimes. Nous espérons entendre incessament cet ouvrage, et nous en rendrons compte." The *Columbus* overture we shall meet in Paris once again, when dealing with the Spring of 1841.

Meantime our other old Magdeburg friend, *Das Liebesverbot*, has not been making rapid headway. At last its author succeeds in inducing the dilatory translator to hear at least a little of its music, with the result that he receives next day a page or two of charming verses. Henceforward Dumersan himself is all aflame for the "new opera," undertakes to see it hurried on to the Renaissance boards, places himself in communication with the regisseur, Salomé, and obtains through him an interview with the director; Dumersan is obliging enough to praise the music of the *jeune Allemand* to the skies,—Anténor shrugs his shoulders, and entrenches himself behind a bank of flowery phrases. Another spell of fruitless waiting; Joly makes no sign. One fine day Dumersan brings the doleful tidings: Salomé has commissioned him to say that M. Joly will have nothing whatever to do with the opera, as in the first place its author is a German, and all the young French composers would be up in arms if they found a foreigner poaching on their preserves; secondly all pieces, to be staged by him, must have been written expressly for his theatre; thirdly he can give none but original French operas; and fourthly —German music would be much too heavy for his audience. It

now is Wagner's turn to intervene. Over every obstacle of the Antechamber he forces his way to a second personal interview with the director; all objections vanish like spectres at cock-crow; the production is assured him, subject to a few vocal excerpts being tried through first. So Dumersan puts his best foot forward in the translating of three selected numbers; Wagner seems to find the French text suit them even better than the German, and with the immediate prospect of a good performance of this sprightly work he actually regains an interest in his cast-off skin.

Not to be too far from the theatrical centre, he exchanges his lodgings in the Rue de la Tonnellerie for brighter quarters on the fourth floor of 25 Rue du Helder, off the Boulevard des Italiens, —the furnishing of which on credit, as Pecht informs us, plunged him afterwards into no small difficulties. Spring has come; the first winter of Parisian discontent is past; he breathes again at promise of a sure success. On the very day of his removal a bolt falls from the blue, with the news of the official bankruptcy of the Théâtre de la Renaissance. Ill-luck has dogged him, sped before him, to his new abode. Reduced to extremities, he has to pitch his artistic key yet a tone or so lower: the Théâtre des Variétés, through Dumersan its regisseur and dramaturg, offers him the uncongenial job of writing music to a burlesque by Dumanoir, *La Descente de la Courtille.* But even this lean bone is snatched from him; a rival vaudeville-vamper promptly stops the threatened competition. According to Gasperini, Wagner had already completed either a portion or the whole of the music, when the theatre-choir declared it "parfaitement inexécutable"; one chorus, however, "Allons à la Courtille"—according to the same authority—was retained and had its hour of popularity. A passing echo, without one undertone of animosity, is to be found in the *Parisian Amusements* next year, when Wagner remarks that the Carnival weather is so bad that people prefer attending the *Descente de la Courtille* at the Théâtre des Variétés to going to see the actual maskers return from that suburb whence the piece derives its title.

He had been spared one humiliation, only to be exposed to a thousand others. "You see me done for"—he makes his dying German musician say—"I was not vanquished on the field of battle, but—horrible to utter—I fell a prey to hunger in the

Antechambers. They are something terrible, those antechambers, and there are many, very many of them in Paris,—with seats of wood or velvet, heated and not heated, paved and unpaved. In those antechambers I dreamed away a fair year of my life. . . . Between I sometimes seemed to hear the wail of a ghost-like oboe; that note thrilled through my every nerve, and cut my heart. One day, when I had dreamed my maddest and that oboe-note was tingling through me at its sharpest, I suddenly awoke. I had forgotten to pay my usual homage to the theatre-lackey as I left the anteroom. With tottering steps I fled the haven of my dreams; on its threshold I stumbled over my poor dog, who was antechambering in the street in wait for his more fortunate master, allowed to antechamber among men. . . . How long I lay, I know not; of the kicks I may have received from passers-by I took no heed; but at last I was awoken by the tenderest kisses—from the warm tongue of my beloved beast" (*P. W.* VII. 61-62).

Woven into this fiction is many a ghastly truth from the author's own experiences in the winter 1839-40. Here we meet his good dog Robber, with its daily bath in the fountain of the Palais Royal, and the sad story of its mysterious loss. For its master there seemed no end to troubles: what further step remained to take, to put his musical abilities to profit? In vain had he harked back to his outlived *Liebesverbot*; in vain had he turned from Opera to Salon ballads, from Salon to the Boulevard theatres. His *Liebesverbot* he now threw wholly overboard, feeling that he "could no longer regard himself as its composer." The change had already commenced amid the artistic desolation of Riga; Paris had completed it; from French and Italian influences he had gained whatever there was to gain for his musical development. Pecht remarks how Wagner's Paris friends observed that "in this one year he had become another man": true enough,—but we cannot follow Pecht in attributing it to "Paris's enormous power of bringing out one's intellectual faculties," except in the sense of a *vis a tergo*; it would be as reasonable to suppose Luther prompted to his work of reformation by the "enormous intellectual stimulus" of Rome. Certainly, immediate contact with the centre of the Operatic solar-system had cleared his views in more than one direction. Had he not forced his way hither, across all obstacles, the mirage might not have been exposed

for years in all its emptiness; at trumpery little German theatres he would still have felt that one court of appeal was yet to seek, for trial of that genre which erst allured him. Here he had learnt the absolute futility of all attempts at compromise.

X.

COMPLETION OF "RIENZI."

Return to "Rienzi."—Musical hack-work.—"Der fliegende Holländer" for the Grand Opéra.—Friendship of the needy: evening reunions at Wagner's.—Contributions to the Gazette Musicale.*—Meeting with Liszt.—"Rienzi" finished.—More journeyman-work.—Napoleon's re-interment.—New Year's eve.*

> *In completing the music of Rienzi I sought to render its artistic due to the tendency that actually had led my steps to Paris, and thus to close a chapter I had already found closed against myself: with that completion I shook off the dust of my past.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

REJECTING all further thought of the smaller Paris theatres, in June 1840 Wagner resumed the composition of *Rienzi*; not with any view to its performance at the Opéra, for in the best event it would be a matter of at least five years ere such a favour could be contemplated: it was Dresden that he had in eye. There a fine new opera-house was in course of erection, after Gottfried Semper's sumptuous plans; the outer structure had been crowned by its roof-beam at the very time of our hero's audacious voyage to Paris; it only waited for internal decoration. At the scenic arrangements the best Parisian craftsmen were already at work, men whose achievements at the Grand Opéra had so often won his admiration. The first of singers, Schröder-Devrient, Tichatschek and others, he knew were engaged. Relying on acquaintanceships of earlier days, he felt that he might hope for admittance at the Royal Saxon theatre, if anywhere.

On the manuscript score we find the commencement of the third act of *Rienzi* dated June the 6th, that act's completion August

11.* A comparison of the last three acts with the earlier two (written before the Paris expedition) shews unmistakable progress in the composer's inner evolution. In the interval, filled up with worries of all kinds, he had made a perceptible approximation to his own true path. We still have the conventional forms of duet, trio, etc.; but they are always in the closest correspondence with the dramatic situation—a remark which equally applies to the solitary "aria," that of Adriano in act iii. In the prelude to the fourth we have the mood of the whole act distinctly stated, just as in the riper works; still more pronouncedly is this the case with the prelude and ensuing "prayer" in the fifth act.—For a minuter analysis we must refer the reader to E. Reuss's suggestive appreciation already-cited

Parallel with this resumption of *Rienzi* we have a course of musical drudgery of the most depressing nature. The only recommendation of Meyerbeer's that had borne real fruit, was an introduction to the publisher of the *Gazette Musicale*—Maurice Schlesinger, the "man with the black hair and never-resting eye" mentioned in the *Report on Halévy's Reine de Chypre* (*P. W.* VII. 207), a congener of the almighty maëstro. For him had Wagner to concoct "arrangements of favourite operas for all the instruments under heaven." Despairing sighs, extorted by the misery of such a plight, are still to be found in scattered scraps of writing with which the autograph-purveyor plies his golden trade. Not only interjections, however, but whole pages of a diary commenced in the summer of 1840 have inadvertently descended to publicity; a few extracts will supply an inkling of the sorrows of those days. "Tears have come unbidden to my eyes again," runs one of these monologues, dated the 23rd of June, "Is one a coward, to yield himself so readily to tears?" Again, "An ailing young German

* The musical *sketch* for the third act appears to have been begun somewhat earlier, the see-saw between draft and orchestral completion occurring thus:—

Third Act:	Sketch, Feb. 15 to July 7, 1840;	Orchestration, June 6 to Aug. 11, 1840.
Fourth ,,	,, , Jul. 10 ,, Aug. 29 ,,	; Orchestration, begun Aug. 14, 1840.
Fifth ,,	,, , Sept. 5 ,, Sept. 19 ,,	; (Intermediate dates are lacking, but the final touch was put to the work on Nov. 19, 1840.)
Overture	,, completed Oct. 23, ,, .	

mechanic was here;—I asked him to come back to breakfast; thereupon Minna reminded me that she would have to lay out her last penny on bread. Poor dear! thou art right—things are black with us; for, everything considered, I can count on nothing *with certainty* but the very greatest misère." Referring to those who display an interest in him, "My only hope would be shameful, were I to be convinced that I am reckoning on mere *alms*! Luckily I can but suppose that people, like Meyerbeer and Laube, would do nothing for me if they did not believe I *deserved* it." Then he is tormented by the dread lest whim or chance should estrange these from him also: in fact, he says, their serious will to help him has been proved by nothing yet, and this gnawing doubt makes him sick at heart. Monday, June 29, "What is to become of me next month, I know not. . . . True, I now have the prospect of earning a trifle by articles and essays in the *Gazette musicale*, and shall also send articles to Lewald in Stuttgart for the 'Europa'; but even in the happiest event, what looms immediately in front of me is too overpowering not to drag me down." A painful calculation follows: "I have only 25 francs left. With them I have to meet a bill of exchange for 150 fr. on the first, and to pay my quarter's rent on the fifteenth! . . . I still am keeping it from my poor wife, that things have come to such a pass,—hoping all along that Laube would send me rescue; not until then should I have disclosed to her how we had had nothing else to count on, and how I had concealed it from her so as not to add another trouble to her mind, already quite unhinged by worries. . . . On the first I can keep it from her no longer. God help me! it will be a dreadful day, if help does not arrive." The day after, June 30, evening: "On our walk I told my wife to-day how we are off for money; I pity the poor dear from the bottom of my heart! It's a mournful bargain.*—Must set to work." †

* Probably alluding to the pawning of Minna's personal trinkets, as stated by Praeger.—W. A. E.

† See Kürschner's *Jahrbuch* (1886, page 289-90), where may also be found a set of private verses by Wagner dated August 4, 1840:—

Nun ist es aus, das schöne Lied,
die ich geliebt, ist nun mein Weib,
Ein gutes tugendhaftes Weib
sie ist mir mehr als Zeitvertreib,
Ich wünschte Jeden gleiches Glück,
doch denke ich zehn Jahr' zurück,
das Lied von meiner Jugend;
ein Weib voll Güt' und Tugend.
ist eine gute Gabe;
sie ist all meine Habe.
ich gäb' es selbst nicht weiter;
so macht' ich's doch gescheidter.

The reference to Meyerbeer shews that Wagner had not yet given up all hope of obtaining solid support for his Parisian schemes through the former's influence. As a fact, he was to receive another glimmer of hope from that direction—another disappointment. The absentee magnate suddenly reappeared in Paris, on a flying visit, made polite inquiries after the progress of his protégé, and placed him in relation with Léon Pillet, newly installed Director of the Grand Opéra. It was a matter of a two to three act opera, to be composed by Wagner for that stage. As he had long been fascinated by the story of the Flying Dutchman, a subject lay ready to his hand; he lost no time in securing Heine's permission to borrow the latter's inventive treatment of the legend, drafted a sketch, and handed it to Pillet, who undertook to get a French textbook written for him on those lines. "Thus far was everything under way," he says, "when Meyerbeer again left Paris, and had to abandon the fulfilment of my wishes to fate." We shall see ere long what unawaited incident doomed this final hope of Paris also; for the present we may simply note that Senta's Ballad, "the thematic germ of the whole opera" (*P. W.* I. 370), would appear to have been completed in verse alike and music at this epoch, i.e. in the thick of the composition of *Rienzi*—a characteristic instance of the overlapping of most of Wagner's dramatic works.

Turning once more from the artist to the man, let us inquire how he is spending his scanty leisure hours in Paris. It is in no first-class society, nor even in the company of second-rate celebrities, that he passes the evenings of laborious days; for Heinrich Heine was barely an acquaintance, and Laube had left Paris in the Spring of 1840 to settle down at Leipzig. His sister, the little "Cile" of whom we have lost sight for so long, had married Eduard Avenarius on March the fifth, and come to live in frugal circumstances in Paris, whither her husband had been despatched as agent of the firm of Brockhaus. Besides these welcome relatives, Wagner expressly states that he "hardly mixed at all with musicians: scholars, painters etc., formed my entourage, and many a rare experience of friendship did I gain in Paris." We have already met most of them last chapter: the "philologist and a painter" who figure as chief mourners in the *End in Paris*, Siegfried Lehrs to wit, who subsequently lent him

the Middle-high-German poem of the *Sängerkrieg* and thus laid the foundation of *Tannhäuser*, and Ernst Kietz the portrait-painter; the pseudonymous Anders, to whom Wagner refers in a letter to Germany as "collaborator in the *Gazette musicale*, employé at the Paris Royal Library, and one of the most thorough-paced music-bibliographs"; Friedrich Pecht, and finally a Herr Brix, who had made Wagner's acquaintance just as he was effecting his unlucky change of quarters. They were simple "needy Germans" like himself, with no ambition to frequent the Café de Paris or the modish garden of the Café des Divans between the Grand and Comic Operas, where the artistic world forgathered, singers, actors, painters, sculptors and reviewers, where Scribe took notes for a new drama amid the clatter of dominoes, and Schlesinger drove bargains with Meyerbeer over a new score. In his *Parisian Fatalities* our hero devotes these words to his compatriots: "The most excellent, the truest Germans are the poor. . . . These needy Germans form a still community in Paris, and observe the vow of abstinence; they mostly have plenty of talent and phantasy, and above all are faithful friends; for my part, I here first learnt what friendship means." When he had exchanged the French metropolis for Dresden he wrote back to his humble friends in Paris: "Of an evening we sit alone, quite alone, and no one drops in as of yore. Ah! how the saddest states in life can leave sweet memories!"—and again, this time to Lehrs: "Here I am incomplete. How the devil should I be blithe and merry, when hundreds of miles lie between us?"

One of the circle, that Friedrich Pecht so largely quoted in our previous chapter, has painted a lifelike picture of these social evenings: "We young Germans who knew him and cared for him, attracted alike by the unflagging riches of his intellect and our sympathy with his amiable wife, were all as poor as church-mice. So the only comfort we could tender him was the proof that he was not absolutely forsaken, that there were people who believed in him and formed a little commune of which he remained the undisputed centre. You see, whilst he was already creating immortal works, however undervalued then, we all were simply scholars, and felt how high he towered above us. . . . A hundred times he cursed the fate that doomed him to make arrangements of Donizetti's music for Schlesinger, and would

dissect its sugared triviality with comical wrath, but so perspicuously that even I, an utter layman, could understand him. . . . The wonderful elasticity with which, for all his misery, he would rise at our evening reunions above the harass of the day, and devote his inexhaustible wit to characterising the great musicians one by one, so that each became quite breathing individualities, still sets me in astonishment; for neither I nor any of my comrades at that age would have been anywhere approaching the position to deliver such terse and accurate judgment on any painter,—of mere disparagement, the first thing to occur to youth, there was not a word with him whenever his seething brain had come to calm. Even his intimacy with the musical products of every age was almost inconceivable in so young a man. He knew the earlier Italians, Palestrina, Pergolese and others, just as well as the older German school; through him I gained my first idea of Bach, and Gluck was his constant preoccupation. Haydn's nature-painting; Mozart's genius, and the unfortunate influences of his position at Salzburg and Vienna; the idiosyncrasies of the French, of Lully, Boieldieu, Auber; the matchless national accents of his darling Weber; Mendelssohn's elegant drawingroom-music; and lastly Beethoven, the monarch of them all: he would set these all before us, singing snatches of their melodies with such vivacity, such plastic power, that they linger in my memory to-day just as he rendered them. I remember that even then he insisted on music's being a language in which much, if not all, grows out of date, unpalatable or unintelligible, in course of time. Thus there was very much in Mozart that was already old-fashioned—and he would hum the passages as he went on—a statement that appalled me at the time. Even the continual transformation of musical instruments, he said, was a cause of this inevitable antiquation; and instrumentation would still be revolutionised, Beethoven having been the first to put the orchestra on the right road. Then he would sketch with wonderful precision the specific character of every instrument, the work for which it was peculiarly adapted, the local-colour of its tone, and so on; though I had no idea at that time that colouring and mood were chief distinctions of his talent, for it would have been impossible to decipher them from his harum-scarum playing. We were told, too, of the absurdity of modern Opera, against which he was already taking arms. Never

have I heard Rossini so aptly criticised, though with ample acknowledgment of his lavish gifts. But this entirely unknown young man dealt with all these famed musicians as his equals; and we, who should have thought a like thing most presumptuous in a budding painter, found it so completely natural and justified in him, that it never struck us as self-conceit. Manifestly, because it was nothing of the kind."

Pecht also tells us of Wagner's singing and playing his own music to the little circle of an evening, though he hastens to add that he understood but little of it, since the composer "behaved to the unfortunate piano as an impatient master to a slave." He goes on to tell us how he gradually came to hear almost the whole of *Rienzi* and the *Flying Dutchman* thus rendered by Wagner: a little inaccuracy as regards the *Dutchman*, since Pecht was no longer in Paris at the time of its actual composition; however, he would have heard Senta's Ballad, and probably some other fragments of the preliminary conception. "The whole dæmonic music with which he pictured the howling of the tempest in the tackle, just as he had lately heard it off the coast of Norway; the sailors' songs he sang to us,—it all is ringing in my ears to-day, after more than forty years. I can see him yet before me, every nerve on fire, as if drawing a whole world along with him. And in everything he did, even in outbursts of the most violent passion, he preserved the same exalted character. Thereafter I have seen Wagner under all possible conditions, in the fiercest storm of rage, as in the maddest fit of hilarity; but never did he lose that special charm and dignity which stamps his music. I know absolutely no other artist in whom the artwork was so completely one with the man. . . . But as to deciding whether he was merely a highly talented and gifted man, or in very truth a great musician, I should have been as little prepared as anybody in those Paris days."

We must leave the friendly circle, and return to the artist's work. The affair of the *Flying Dutchman* at the Grand Opéra had entered a new and unexpected phase. At one of his calls on Léon Pillet, Wagner made the astounding discovery that his draft had so pleased the Director that he desired to use it in another fashion. It was this way: in accordance with a former promise, so he said, Pillet felt obliged to give another composer an opera-book as soon as possible; the draft at present in his

hands seemed just the thing; surely Wagner would have no objection to parting with it when he reflected that he could not hope for any order from the Opéra for quite four years, as there were so many other candidates with prior claims. Of course, the man went on, that would be too long for him to be dragging this subject about with him; he would soon invent a new one, and console himself for the little sacrifice. The young master fought tooth and nail against the proposal, but could effect nothing more than its temporary postponement. He counted on Meyerbeer's speedy return, and was silent.

His energies were now employed in a third direction; besides his work at *Rienzi*, and those fatal arrangements for Schlesinger, in July he became one of the so-called sub-editors of the *Gazette Musicale*, the property of that enterprising music-dealer. During the three years 1840 to 1842 we find his name on the title-page, "Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, rédigée par M.M. . . . Richard Wagner." This paper appeared on an average twice a week, but the "sub-editors" had nothing to do with its editing; they were merely occasional contributors, paid by the line or column. In his *Communication to my Friends* Wagner alludes to the engagement as follows: "The publisher of the Gazette Musicale commissioned me, besides arranging melodies for my daily bread, to write him articles for his paper. To him it was a matter of indifference, *which* I sent: not to me. Just as I found my deepest humiliation in the one task, I greedily snatched at the other to revenge myself for that humiliation. . . . Every line that I wrote was a cry of revolt against the conditions of our modern art: I have been told that this caused much amusement." However, it was not with a cry of revolt that he led off; he had to feel his way first. Fourteen days after the entry in his diary on June 29, to the effect that he had just been promised the job, his first article appeared (Sunday, July 12) "De la musique allemande"*—an eloquent appeal to the French on behalf of a proper understanding of the music of his homeland. Then comes a break, corresponding pretty closely with the composition of the fourth and fifth acts of *Rienzi*, and we have nothing more till the appearance of an obviously bespoken

* Immediately facing it, in the bound volume, we have an advertisement on the back of the previous number, "Les Deux Grenadiers: mélodie de Richard Wagner. Prix: 5 fr."

review of Alexis Lvoff's adaptation of Pergolese's *Stabat Mater*, chiefly remarkable for its championship of Mozart's additions to the instrumentation of Handel's *Messiah*. This is followed a week later (Oct. 18, 1840) by the essay "Du métier de virtuose et de l'indépendance des compositeurs: fantaisie esthétique d'un musicien," in which the idols of the Parisian *beau monde*, Rubini and Persiani, are most damagingly hurled against the adamantine front of *Don Giovanni*. The "cry of revolt" had been raised, though the editor-in-chief clapped a mute on it.*

This article, in its present or redintegrated form, is one of the wittiest things ever penned; but its wit is tempered by most solemn earnest. Beginning with a poetic fable, of the wonder-jewel found by the two miners of Salzburg and Bonn, it goes on to lay down the lines that should be followed by the musical interpreter, and, without naming names, contrasts the method of Thalberg with that of Liszt: "Indeed there are true artists among the virtuosi; they owe their reputation to their moving execution of the noblest tone-works of the greatest masters. Where would the public's acquaintance with these latter be slumbering, had not those pre-eminently elect arisen from the chaos of music-makery, to shew the world what These really were and did?" But the surroundings in which the great master's spirit is conjured up! "All round sit high-bred ladies, row after row of high-bred ladies, and in a wide half-moon behind them sprightly gentlemen with lorgnettes in the eye. But Beethoven is there, midst all the perfumed agony of dream-rocked elegance: it really is Beethoven, sinewy and broad, in all his sad omnipotence. Yet who comes with him? Great God!—Guillaume Tell, Robert the Devil, and—who after these? *Weber* the tender and true. Good! And then:—a 'Galop.' O heavens! Who has once written galops himself, who has had his finger in potpourris, knows what a pinch can drive us to it when it is a question of drawing near to Beethoven at all costs. I took the measure of the awful need that could drive another man to-day to potpourris and galops, to gain the chance of preaching Beethoven; and though I must admire the virtuoso in this instance, I cursed all virtuosity" (*P. W.* VII. 113). For the skit on the Italians' rendering, or rending, of Mozart's immortal work, which forms

* See my preface to Vol. VII. of the *Prose Works*.—W. A. E.

this essay's peroration, we must refer the reader to the original; it is too perfect to bear compression.

It was somewhere near this date that the writer of the above made the personal acquaintance of one who was subsequently to form so important a factor in his career. In the first letter of the Wagner-Liszt Correspondence we read that Laube had met a friend and compatriot of Liszt's at Carlsbad in the summer, and spoken to him of Wagner and his plans, expressing a desire that the friend should bring the two artists together; Wagner himself is uncertain whether any letter of recommendation had ever been sent, but recalls the fact that he was casually introduced by Schlesinger in the late autumn of 1840. The relative position of the two men was radically different then to what it became in after years: Liszt, with his phenomenal playing, was worshipped by the public wherever he went, and moreover had the knack of making himself at home in the most exclusive circles, in fact was a polished man of the world; Wagner was an unknown provincial, struggling in the direst poverty for a recognition not so light to compass. Wagner pays a call on Liszt, and it is by no means surprising that he should have returned from that call in bad humour; the external contrast of their natures would naturally be seized before the common bond within. With the greatest candour, at a time when the friendship and support of Liszt was the only rock left to build on—namely in exile ten years later—Wagner describes his impressions of this first encounter:* "In that world which I had longed to tread with lustre, when I yearned from petty things to grand, Liszt had unconsciously grown up from tenderest youth, to be its wonder and joy at a time when I could recognise nothing but its void and nullity with all the chagrin of a disillusioned man. I had no opportunity to make him know me in myself and work: superficial, therefore, as was the only knowledge he could gain of me, equally so was the fashion of our interview. This was quite explicable on his part; for was he not in the daily throng of the most kaleidoscopic of affairs? I, on the other hand, was not just then in the mood calmly and fairly to seek for the simplest explanation of a manner which,

* Or possibly of the second visit, in the Spring of 1841: either the one or the other would seem to have been of but short duration, and thus would have slipped from Wagner's recollection when writing his *Communication* (1851). —W. A. E.

civil enough in itself, was of all others the kind to ruffle *me*. I did not visit Liszt again, and he remained in that category one views as foreign and inimical to one's nature." For all that, the surface contradiction of their natures did not prevent the honest critic from distinguishing between Liszt and Liszt's environment: in the Spring of 1841 he writes to the *Abendzeitung*, "What would and could Liszt not be, were he no famous man, or rather, had not people made him famous! He could and would be a free artist, a little god, instead of the slave of the most fatuous of all publics, the public of the virtuoso" (*P. W.* VIII. 136).

On the 19th of November the Gazette prints the first instalment of the *Pilgrimage to Beethoven* ("Une visite à Beethoven: épisode de la vie d'un musicien allemand"), continued and completed Nov. 22 and Dec. 3. This delightful little tale is too well known to call for comment, though we may remind the reader of its echoes from Wagner's own journey through Bohemia eight years previously. Gasperini tells us, "*Une visite à Beethoven* fut très remarquée par Berlioz, qui en parla avec éloge dans le *Journal des Débats*." Nor was this the only contribution of Wagner's warmly approved by Berlioz, as may be seen in his *Voyage Musical*; whilst Heine himself, according to Pecht, was charmed with the young man's writings.

On this same November 19 the last touch was put to the score of *Rienzi*, finished in an incredibly short time, considering all the circumstances. Not a moment did its author lose in posting off the bulging packet, five volumes big with hopes, to the bureau of the Royal Court-theatre in Dresden. What would be its fate? So far as he himself was concerned, not a stone was left unturned; as proved by various letters of this date. One of them, written at the end of the month, is a petition to the King himself;* a manly document breathing that sincere devotion the author had always felt towards the person of his sovereign, and which he preserved even through and past the stormy days of revolution. On the 4th of December it is followed by a letter to General-direktor von Lüttichau, pointing out that *Rienzi* is the work of a *Saxon*, whose honest endeavour it is to devote his best and ripest

* The full text will be found in R. Prölss' *Geschichte des Dresdener Hoftheaters* (pp. 252 et seq.).

efforts to his fatherland, and suggesting that it might not unbecomingly find a place among those works "selected for production immediately after the inauguration of the new house." That inauguration took place four months later, April 12, 1841, with Goethe's *Tasso*, followed on the operatic side by Weber's *Euryanthe*. *Rienzi* had to wait a full year and a half thereafter; but what else could be expected?

"It was well that my opera was finished, for I now saw myself compelled to bid a long farewell to any practice of my art," says Wagner concerning this period, calling it "the culminating point of the utter misery of my existence" (*P. W.* I. 18). None of his friends—as poor as himself—could help him, and nothing but wellnigh superhuman exertions in Schlesinger's mill kept body and soul together. The *Flying Dutchman* was not to be dreamt of, for his whole time was absorbed by those cursed arrangements of "favourite operas," descending even to his abomination the cornet-à-pistons. A faint notion of this orgy may be gained from an advertisement in the Gazette Musicale of the ensuing summer, offering to the musical world the overture and three suites from Donizetti's *Favorite*, the overture and two suites from Halévy's *Guitarrero*, arranged by Wagner for two violins, for a string quartet, etc., etc. That, however, would only represent a portion, and the more ambitious portion of his hack-work, for to this day the autographs of similar pot-boilers are being dragged to light by the manuscript-hawker.

But the man had eyes alert for what went on in the great world around him, and we come across more than one reference to a grand ceremony that took place this winter, the re-interment of Napoleon's ashes—no, not ashes, for Wagner expressly tells us that "they are now most scrupulously called *le corps de l'empereur*, since the day when people learnt that the hero had been found in tolerably good preservation; wherefore also that elegant cast of Dantan's, representing Thiers with a casket containing Napoleon's ashes under his arm, has suddenly vanished from the shop-windows." England had consented to the remains of her once-feared enemy being removed by the Prince de Joinville from S. Helena for a second burial, and the event was celebrated in Paris with the greatest pomp. Wagner himself appears to have been much impressed by the prospect of the solemn function, for there exists a five-strophe poem of his bearing the date "Paris,

December 15, at 7 in the morning."* He must have risen to write it with freezing fingers, for, as he tells us elsewhere, "All the world knows that on that day God sent the Parisians an unparalleled degree of cold." But the visitors to the chapel of the Invalides were not to be deterred by the state of the thermometer: "For these obsequies the Ministry of Public Affairs had formed the wise resolve that, in lieu of Rossini's *Cenerentola* [a hidden allusion to the "ashes"] Mozart's *Requiem* should be sung. The high world of Paris was quite carried away by this flash of insight; and thus it came to pass that our dilettantist duchesses and countesses were given something very different to hear, for once, from what they were accustomed to at the Italian Opera. With the most affecting lack of prejudice they accommodated themselves to everything: they heard Rubini and Persiani,—they melted away; instead of their fans, they dropped their muffs; they leant back on their costly furs (for it was mortal cold in church on December 15, 1840)—and, just as at the Opera, they lisped 'C'est ravissant!'" (*P. W.* VII. 145).

This re-interment is connected in the *Parisian Fatalities* with the tragi-comic story of a young German whom Wagner says he met after "freezing for four hours on the terrace" outside. Possibly the "young German" is the exaggerated portrait of a real person, but more probably a mere figment of the author's lively fancy. "He was a young man whom God knows what sad chance had driven to Paris. His attainments were quite beyond the common, for he was physician, jurist, writer, poet and scholar; he understood Goethe's *Faust* from the Prologue in Heaven to the Chorus Mysticus, could write prescriptions and conduct actions-at-law with any man; moreover he could copy music, and prove you that man has no soul. Relying on these enormous acquirements, he naturally thought it easy to gain distinction in Paris even without a sou in his pocket." Wagner visits him in the

* This document also has found its way to the auction-mart: place, Berlin; time, June 8, 1886; price, over a hundred marks. The verses are unrhymed, probably with an idea of their translation into French; the last one runs as under:—

"Doch was erblick' ich—jenes Denkmal dort, sieh' hin—was im Triumph man führt—
Ist's Beute, sind es stolze Siegstrophä'n, die er im fernen Land gewann?
Sein Ehrenbette schliesst es ein— ein kleiner Hut dient ihm zur Zier—
der ihn dereinst getragen, der *Kaiser* kehrt zurück!"

hospital of the Hôtel Dieu, for which he has a good word to say, and "supplies him with snuff," while the young man is "busy elaborating a proof that the soul consists of carbonic acid and galvanism"; he finds him employment as a copyist, but "this channel soon dried up, as I unfortunately didn't know an overwhelming number of people with music to copy." The young man's story is pursued with much humour and ingenuity to the bathos of marriage with the draconian widow of an estaminet-keeper: "it passed in less than six Parisian months, and would have spun itself off still quicker, had my richly-gifted friend employed more vehemence in the solution of his problem, in a word, had it seemed good to him to try the Paris system of intrigue and hocus-pocus."

Wagner's own feeling of utter hopelessness in Paris finds voice in the above. From the spectacle of luxury accompanied by the *Requiem* of a great musician who himself was shovelled into a pauper's grave, he returns to his icy quarters in the Rue du Helder with nothing before him but the most grinding drudgery to keep a home above his head. Not a line has come from Dresden; not even an acknowledgment of the receipt of his bulky score. Meyerbeer must be appealed to again: though he had profited nothing by the maëstro's patronage in Paris, perhaps he could do something for him in Germany. It is touching to find a postscript in a letter to Schumann of the end of this December, begging him "not to let Meyerbeer be run down quite so much [in the *Neue Zeitschrift*], as I owe everything to him, especially my approaching unbounded celebrity." This is the first letter to Schumann since the Königsberg period, yet it is written with all the mirthful familiarity of an old companion, beginning: "I've been almost a year and a half in Paris, and am doing splendidly, for I'm not yet starved to death." Not a word is said about *Rienzi*, but he has heard that Schumann has just composed Heine's *Grenadiere*, introducing the *Marseillaise*: "Last winter I composed it too, and also wound up with the *Marseillaise*. What a striking coincidence!—It was sung here and there, and has gained me the order of the Legion of Honour and a pension of 20,000 fr. a year, which I draw direct from Louis Philippe's private purse. * But I'm not puffed up, and herewith I privately re-dedicate my composition to yourself, though it has

* An obvious slap at Heine.

already been dedicated to Heine. As an equivalent I hereby make known to you that I accept the private dedication of *your* Grenadiers, and am expecting the complimentary copy."

With the same irrepressible gaiety of spirit the year was ushered out, for all the troubles it had brought him. Let Pecht be spokesman: "On New Year's eve I met Kietz at the café, when he proposed that, as Wagner was sitting very dismally at home, we should arrange a picnic to see the old year fairly out. No sooner said than done. Kietz knew the son of the famous Moët, and went off for a hamper of champagne at our common cost; Brix, Anders and I were to see to a cold collation. All heavily laden we met at Brix's room, and marched in solemn procession —Kietz in front with the champagne, we others with all sorts of cold meats, Cheshire and Roquefort cheese, Vienna bread and sweet pastry—to the Wagners' apartments close by. It was no small surprise to them, when his wife opened the door. Wagner, whose temperament was just like a watch-spring, easily compressed but rebounding with redoubled energy, soon forgot all his cares. His humour, made still droller by his Saxon dialect, was of that finer quality which, for all its liveliness, never forgets the presence of women; but his mirth was inexhaustible. As the clock struck twelve he jumped on a chair, and spouted forth a prophecy that lasted for at least thirty minutes, in which he contrasted our squalid past and present with the brilliant future that awaited us, sparing neither himself nor us an occasional sly dig. It all came so pat from his lips, so full of wit and free of hesitancy, that I have never heard verse so remarkably improvised in all my life. I don't know if Wagner ever treated others to a similar entertainment; but I do know that none of us ever experienced such a treat again."

We may close this chapter with Pecht's testimony that "the friends who did not despair of him in this his time of greatest straits were never forgotten or disowned in after days by the world-famed master; he ever kept the same old faith with them."

XI.

"DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER."

"An End in Paris." — Failure of the Columbus-overture.— News-letters to the Abendzeitung.—Projected Life of Beethoven.— Henri Vieuxtemps, Schindler, Liszt.—In the country near Meudon. —The "Freischütz" in Paris.—"Rienzi" accepted at Dresden.— Poem and music of the "Flying Dutchman."—Return to Paris: efforts to get the "Dutchman" accepted at Leipzig, Munich, Berlin. — "Die Sarazenin." — "Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg."—Return to Germany.

> *Certainly "the effective stage-piece" forms the basis of the Dutchman no less than of Rienzi. But everyone perhaps will feel that something important had happened meanwhile to the author; perhaps a violent shock, in any case a serious crisis, to which yearning and loathing contributed in equal measure.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

THE beginning of 1841 is marked by the appearance in the *Gazette Musicale* of Wagner's essay "On the Overture," which may be classed with his first contribution, that "On German Music," as exhibiting the more reflective, or objective aspect of his literary work. This essay is of permanent æsthetic value, for although it does not absolutely fix the canons for construction of an overture, it sets clearly forth the only alternative courses. Its author himself would appear to have attached more weight to it in after years than to his other writings of this period, as he has given it a separate heading in vol. i. of the *Gesammelte Schriften*, not including it in what he groups as "Tales and Articles of a German Musician in Paris."

That "German Musician"—in reality a thin veil for himself—seems to have been a gradual creation of his brain; there are several stages in his evolution. First we have simply the "Fantaisie esthétique d'un musicien," as sub-title to *The Virtuoso*

and the Artist; then "Episode de la vie d'un musicien allemand," as sub-title to the *Pilgrimage;* next, as a collective title for a proposed series of articles, "Crotchets from the diary of a poor musician";* and finally "Caprices esthétiques extraits du journal d'un musicien défunt," as sub-title to *The Artist and Publicity.* There is something very characteristic of the dramatist, in this gradual projection of himself outside himself; the imaginary being, supposed to have penned these articles, had become a personage apart from the man who was really writing them,—and at last the author had to kill his double with the *End in Paris.* A postscript to its French version, *Un musicien étranger à Paris,* promises to publish in the next few numbers of the Gazette, "sous le titre de Caprices esthétiques d'un musicien, les differentes parties du journal du défunt"; yet *The Artist and Publicity* (April 1841) and *A happy evening* (Oct.—Nov. 1841) are the only further contributions to the French journal that can be properly regarded in this light. The German Musician who came to Paris seeking fame and fortune was virtually dead and buried, and "les partitions qui composent le reste de sa succession," ironically offered in that postscript to "MM. les directeurs d'Opéra," remained the only part of the "defunct's" estate which Richard Wagner clung to.

The *End in Paris* seems to have been first conceived immediately after the completion of *Rienzi* and the appearance of the *Pilgrimage to Beethoven,*† to which it forms a touching sequel. Take these two tales, combine them with the *Happy evening* and *Artist and Publicity,* and you obtain at very small expense of time a psychological picture of Wagner in the middle of his Paris period such as no Laube or Pecht has remotely attempted. These friends all remarked that "he had become another man," but they were none of them profound enough to gauge the import of the change: in Paris he had undergone a kind of self-"conversion," his soul had woken through dissatisfaction to dim consciousness of its own greatness, and therefore of its solitude. When the dying musician in the *End in Paris* makes his confession of faith and sees the heavens open with their fair assemblage of "disciples of high Art, transfigured in a heavenly

* See *Prose Works* Vol. VII. p. xvii.—W. A. E.

† See the original sketch translated in my preface to Vol. VIII. *Prose Works.*—W. A. E.

fabric of sun-drenched fragrance of sweet sounds," it is a revelation of his own immortal genius, and he feels himself a member of the tribe of Gluck, Mozart and Beethoven: "I, also, am an artist." He can look with calmness on the shipwreck of his instant hopes, for "A good spirit protects him, apparently his own: he is spared fulfilment of his wishes," and can bid his soul "Laugh, be light-minded,—but have patience and suffer.—Dream! 'Tis the best" (*Artist and Publ.*). He puts it autobiographically a few years later: "The handful of true friends who gathered cheerily around me of an evening in the triste retirement of my rooms I thus informed that I had broken with every wish and every expectation of success in Paris, and that the young man who had come there with such notions in his head was positively dead and buried" (*P. W.* I. 304).

These words are literally true; yet, even with all the glamour of Paris faded, he could afford to lose no opportunity of making himself known, for he had no definite prospect of a livelihood elsewhere. Thus we find him embracing the chance of at least appearing with an instrumental work before the Paris public. Schlesinger had the agreeable habit of giving the subscribers to his *Gazette* a series of vocal and instrumental concerts every year, in the Salle S. Honoré: the ninth of this season, on February 4, 1841, was to consist almost exclusively of German works rendered by German performers—a circumstance that drew from the critics a sarcasm anent its "parfum allemand." Sophie Löwe* (subsequently Princess Lichtenstein) sang Beethoven's *Adelaide* and an aria from Persiani's *Inez de Castro*; Kathinka Heinefetter, the youngest of three sister vocalists, sang Schubert's *Wanderer* and the inevitable aria from *Robert*; among other virtuosi, Charles Hallé played the pianoforte. The concert was to commence with an overture by Wagner: the *Faust* being out of the question, there was nothing for it but to fall back on *Columbus*. It was not a success, for reasons to be gathered from contemporary accounts. A. Specht, musical critic of the *Artiste*, sums up his impressions as follows: "The composer of the overture *Christoph Columbus*, Herr Richard Wagner, is one of the most distinguished contributors to the Gazette Musicale. After the skilful way in which he had expounded his theories on the Overture in that journal, we were curious to see how he would

* See *Prose Works* VIII. 112-113, 116 and 139.

apply them in practice. The *Columbus* overture may be divided into two main sections: the first depicts the doubts and discouragements of the hero, whose dogged adherence to his plan is dictated by a voice from above. Unfortunately the leading theme, intended to express this idea, was entrusted to the trumpets, and they consistently played wrong; the real meaning of a very cleverly worked-out composition was therefore lost on all but a mere handful of serious hearers. The ideas in the work shew dignity and artistic finish, and the extremely brief closing Allegro gives exalted expression to Columbus's triumph. Monsieur Valentino's orchestra owes Herr Wagner a rehabilitation." To the same effect the reporter of the *Gazette*, Henri Blanchard: "Ce morceau, qui a plutôt le caractère et la forme d'une introduction, mérite-t-il bien la définition d'ouverture que l'auteur a si bien définie dernièrement dans la Gazette Musicale? A-t-il voulu peindre l'infini de la pleine mer, de l'horizon qui semblait sans but aux compagnons du célèbre navigateur, par le trémolo aigu des violons? Les entrées d'instruments de cuivre reviennent trop uniformément et avec trop d'obstination; d'ailleurs, leurs discordances qui choquaient les oreilles exercées et délicates n'ont pas permis d'apprécier à sa juste valeur le travail de M. Wagner qui, malgré ce contretemps, nous a paru l'œuvre d'un artiste ayant des idées larges, assises, et connaissant bien les ressources de l'instrumentation moderne." Berlioz, on the other hand, has nothing to say of this overture in his report to the *Journal des Débats*, though a word of encouragement would have been of great service to the young composer, as that report was transferred to various German papers, among others the *Neue Zeitschrift*; according to him, the main attention of the audience was centred on Frl. Löwe, and even Hallé's excellence was scarcely noticed.

So much for the view from without: Pecht gives us what we may call the family aspect of the little event. As Wagner was engaged in the green-room, though he did not actually conduct his work, Pecht was entrusted with the duty of escorting Minna: "The hall was already fairly full, when we arrived and took our seats in the middle of the stalls. Frau Wagner, for whom so much was at stake, naturally sat in great nervous excitement, her heart in her mouth. The hall became more and more filled, especially with German fellow-countrymen. I myself was in the utmost state of tension, eager to hear at last what Wagner's

music sounded like, and how it would be received by an audience bred on Bellini, Donizetti and Rossini. But, little as I and the rest of the audience understood of the music, the case was still worse with the bandsmen: they had practised, or rather *not* practised, the work with great repugnance, and at an entry of the brass came so shamefully to grief that the audience, previously as still as mice, became restless and commenced to hiss. Poor Frau Wagner, who had been sitting with bated breath, at once burst into tears; she almost had a fainting fit, and attracted the attention of everybody near us. In my terrible embarrassment I could think of no other expedient than downright rudeness, and told her I should have expected something more sensible of an old stage-hand, than to make a scene about stupid bandsmen. This piece of brutality had the effect intended; her indignation brought the lady round a little, and we were able to beat our retreat unobstructed. Scarcely were we out of the hall, than we met Wagner and our other friends, he shewing less dejection than annoyance at the contretemps. We all accompanied the couple home, to offer consolation: a task the easier, as we had at least made out that a new style of music was being aimed at here with obvious power; perhaps something unattainable, quite certainly not something insignificant. Naturally we did our best to cheer our hosts by emptying the vials of our scorn upon the wretched orchestra, and praising the piece itself to the top of our bent. But Wagner seemed to need no solace; never have I seen him under a more delightful aspect, than after this defeat. Not for a moment did he lose his reckless humour, when once we were comfortably seated at home: he was already laughing with one eye, ere the other had quite ceased weeping; his innate bravery had not forsaken him. A little supper stood awaiting us, to celebrate the expected success: we made it our consolation-cup. Quips and jokes soon passed the evening, and at midnight we left the composer more certain than ever of his genius."

But supposing Germany were to fail him too! This haunting fear is the only explanation of many a veering in his compass. He had as yet no news as to the acceptance or rejection of *Rienzi*, and such silence was unbearable to a man in his precarious situation. Among the Dresden authorities appealed to by letter, the first to deign an answer was the Secretary of the Royal theatre, Hofrath Winkler, alias Theodor Hell (whom we

met long ago); a marvellous specimen of Dresden's pigtail period, a man with a name for shifty ambiguity, and exhibiting in his relations with Wagner a strange mixture of sympathy and self-interest. Winkler referred to an official reply alleged to have been already despatched, though never received by Wagner, and gave him various well-meant hints as to minor obstacles to a decision on the part of the General Intendant, such as the introduction of a "Cardinal" in the plot, etc. The worst of it was, in his muddling way he gave Wagner to understand that *no text-book* had been enclosed with the score, and thus induced him to write and send a second copy—with a few explanatory notes and modifications, to avoid any likely offence. A pencil-note by the Director, on this second copy, shews that it was a work of supererogation, for text-book and score were already reposing tranquilly in the hands of Reissiger (one of the two chief conductors). Laube, on the other hand, had meantime had a conversation with Schröder-Devrient, and transmitted quite flattering tidings; whilst an old friend of the Geyer family, Regisseur and costume-designer Ferdinand Heine, sends a message now and again through friend Kietz. But that is all. Wagner's repeated attempts to accelerate the deadly slow court-tempo, his entreaties to Reissiger, Schröder-Devrient, Tichatschek,* meet with hardly any response. Nine months later we find him writing to F. Heine: "*You* are silent; Herr Fischer is silent, and I'm almost afraid the whole world would be silent if I did not write reports to the Abendzeitung and look up French comedies."

Yes, it had come to hunting up French comedies for two different patrons who required that little fillip to their produc-

* Wagner is most solicitous as to whether the part would suit the taste and style of this excellent tenor: no theatre in the world, he writes, could offer him artists of the dramatic stamp of Tichatschek and Schröder-Devrient; yet how would it be possible to put enthusiasm into a task one did not care for? The artist must be free, to devote warmth and affection to a rôle. The Rienzi that had sprung from his inmost heart was in the fullest sense of the word a *hero*,—an inspired zealot who appears as a dazzling ray of light among a people profoundly degenerate, which he feels called to enlighten and uplift. This Rienzi is of the youthful age of *eight-and-twenty* [Wagner's *own*],—a circumstance that, in conjunction with Wagner's estimate of the possibilities of the tenor voice, had moved him to write the part for a *tenor*, and thus transgress the convention that tenors should be given none but lover's parts, etc., etc.

tivity, in return for whatever problematic service they might render the cause of poor *Rienzi*. "Young Germany" could no more get on without its pinch of Lutetian salt, than could the palate of old Pigtail. "Here, my good Laube, I send you *sous bande* the sort of pieces you desired," says a letter of Wagner's dated March the 13th.* "Their selection was a matter of some perplexity to me at first; but I went through the repertory of all the theatres for the last few months, choosing the pieces that had been oftenest given and most discussed, and was fortunate enough, after buying them, to find my choice approved by someone who had seen them all upon the stage. The money for it I got Heine to advance me"—manifestly with Laube's authority. The other customer for the latest *articles de Paris* was our old friend Hofrath Winkler of Dresden, with an insatiable appetite for spice and novelty. Throughout the whole of 1841 he managed to chain the young master to the tailboard of his rumbling old cart, the *Abendzeitung*, by the promise of his protection of *Rienzi*. No less than ten long news-letters did he extract from Wagner in the period Feb. 23 to Dec. 31,—not counting the German reprint of his pair of Paris novelettes. Only two of these, the report on the Paris *Freischütz* and that on Halévy's *Reine de Chypre*, did Wagner think fit to include in his Collected Writings (1871); but the reader will find the remainder translated at length in Vol. VIII. of the *Prose Works*, and may judge for himself of the wonderful vim that kept the author head-erect in the midst of his endless worries. The first of the series makes significant allusion to the Mont de Piété—or pawnbroker's shop: on June 8, 1886, its manuscript was publicly sold in Berlin for a hundred marks, and dirt-cheap at that; but if the writer received a bare fifth of such a sum for his contribution, he might think himself lucky.

The private letter to Laube, mentioned at the beginning of the last paragraph, contains a few sad personal particulars. Spring has come, but with no promise for Wagner: his work is drawing to an end, he says (apparently those "arrangements" for Schlesinger), and there is no hope of any more (a little later on, though). He is not yet clear of his debts, and has had the additional misfortune, owing to ignorance of French regulations, to give notice to quit his quarters in the Rue du Helder a week too late, thereby upsetting all his plans for a cheap summer

* In the possession of M. Alfred Bovet, of Valentigney, Doubs, France.

holiday. As to his rich brother-in-law Friedrich Brockhaus, "I have no answer from him yet. Oh! I know the sort of people!"* His literary work, helpful as it may be to him otherwise, brings him next to nothing in; and it is a misery to see absolutely no prospect of succeeding as *musician*. He must make up his mind to take a bold step the beginning of next winter,—bold indeed, in fact impracticable, for it is this: "I must give a grand concert with the Conservatoire orchestra and chorus, and bring my best things out; otherwise not a soul here will ever get to know me. But that could only be brought to pass by a favourable issue to my Dresden business. How much longer is that going to take? For three months the people have had my packet, and not a single direct word have I obtained from them. If only I knew what they're brooding!" At the letter's close he speaks of the approaching departure of friend Pecht, who had just sent in a fine picture to the annual exhibition;† but the quick of his trouble lies in the last postscript, wedged in at the paper's very edge, "Der unselige *Meyerbeer!!!*" —"That wretched Meyerbeer!" This was on March 13, 1841, after Wagner had waited in vain a whole fourth of a year for an answer from Dresden. The sequel plainly points to his having adopted some means or other at this very time, to bring pressure to bear upon Meyerbeer; for on the 18th of the same month the almighty one at last despatches a letter from Baden to von Lüttichau at Dresden. The general tone of Meyerbeer's epistle seems that of a man who is anxious to rid himself at one stroke of an importunate suitor; but it will be fairer to let the reader form his own opinion from a faithful translation of its text, especially as this is the only written document available on the Meyerbeer side of the question:—

Baden, 18. 3. 41.

Your Excellency

Will forgive me if I burden you with these lines; but I have too vivid a remembrance of your constant kindness to myself, to be able to refuse a

* When the answer came, as Tappert tells us (*Mus. Woch.* 1888, p. 17), it was to the effect that assistance must depend on the applicant's changing *his mode of life*; to which Wagner pointedly replied, "Had I had the good fortune to be made a musical conductor in Leipzig, I should never have hit on the eccentric idea of seeking my fortune in Paris."

† Poor Pecht had got through all his money, and must return home with nothing but the barren laurels of an acceptance; his departure was closely

young and interesting countryman, when, with perhaps too flattering a reliance on my influence with Your Excellency, he begs me to support his petition with these lines. Herr Richard Wagner of Leipzig is a young composer who not only has a sound musical education, but also much fancy, and moreover possesses general literary culture; and whose whole situation, I should say, deserves sympathy in his fatherland in every respect. His greatest wish is to have the opera "Rienzi," both text and music of which he has himself composed, brought to performance on the new Royal Stage at Dresden. Certain pieces from it, that he played to me, I found full of fancy, and of much dramatic effect. May the young artist enjoy the protection of Your Excellency, and find opportunity of getting his fine talent more generally recognised. Once more I crave the indulgence of Your Excellency, and beg you to preserve me your condescension and good will.

Most respectfully

Your Excellency's most faithful servant

MEYERBEER.

A slight inflammation of the eyes compels me to dictate this letter.*

It is impossible to say whether this letter had any direct influence upon the ultimate decision of the Dresden Intendanz; but it certainly did not act like magic, for no official answer was received by Wagner until another three months later.

To pursue our chronicle: on April 1 the Gazette brought out that priceless gem, *Le Musicien et la publicité*—still better in its German form of *Der Künstler und die Öffentlichkeit.* That its exquisite blend of wit and sadness was lost upon the editor-in-chief, E. Monnais, seems proved by the singular curtailment of the French version. Perhaps it was for this reason that the "excerpts from the pocket-book of a defunct musician" came to a sudden end, and Wagner turned the direction of his literary efforts mainly homewards. We have already seen how he began to supply the Dresden *Abendzeitung* with chatty feuilletons at the end of February: their series is unbroken to the end of the year, varied only by the reproduction of the *Pilgrimage* and *End* in the German tongue. Nor is Hofrath Winkler's paper the only recipient of his attentions in the fatherland. Last summer, in the thick of his work at *Rienzi*, he had been asked by August Lewald for co-operation in the *Europa*: to eke his living out

followed by that of Brix, for Buenos Ayres. Another of the circle, Kietz, exhibited "an excellent crayon-drawing," the portrait of Minna, who, it will be remembered, was "as pretty as a picture."

* The original German will be found in R. Prölss's *Beitrage zur Geschichte des Hoftheaters zu Dresden.*

by "amusing contributions" he sends the *Parisian Amusements*, soon to be followed by the *Parisian Fatalities*. The manuscript of the first-named he accompanies by his three unpublished French romances, *Dors mon enfant*, *Mignonne* and *Attente*,* at the same time begging with engaging frankness for their speedy publication, "less out of vanity, to my shame be it said, than for want of money. A rascal, who makes himself out better than he is—I've been so treated here!"

Thus bandied from five-line to one-line composition, it would have been some consolation to know that his literary talent at least was being put to higher use. Occasion lay to hand. Anders, the Beethoven-worshipper, had for years been accumulating quite a mass of invaluable biographic and bibliographic material concerning his idol; but, his pen being too heavy on the wing, its arrangement and elaboration had hitherto lain dormant in the mind of the collector. He now approached Wagner with a view to the erection in common of a great literary monument, he to supply the matter, Wagner its sifting and working up. Imagine the possibilities opened out: at a time when Wagner's scriptorial style was at its most perspicuous; when the veil that covered the Bonn master's last great works was scarcely lifted; and when the public verdict on that giant among giants was left to people like Fétis, Ulibicheff and so on. Wagner embraced the proposal with enthusiasm, and from March to May of 1841 he strove his utmost to obtain the necessary go-between, a publisher. Apparently he never got quite so far as to commence the actual writing of this Life; in his present situation that could not very well be undertaken without some prospect of pecuniary reward. Through Laube, Lewald, Theodor Hell, as intermediaries, the work was offered to three of the most eminent German publishers, to Brockhaus, Cotta, and Arnold. To all three of them was submitted a comprehensive draft-prospectus for the trade, dealing with the contents and proposed method of the work, its exact form (two volumes, of about 480 pages each), together with a proposal about the author's fee and an undertaking to complete and forward the whole of the manuscript in course of one year. What measures these enterprising purveyors of literature may have taken to ensure success, deponent sayeth not: the project was never realised.

In the prevailing gloom of this Paris period one is apt to forget

* All published in the *Europa* in the course of 1841.

its passing gleams: to such belongs the re-encounter with Henri Vieuxtemps. Wagner had made his acquaintance two years previously at Riga, where Vieuxtemps (on an artistic tour with Franz Servais) had given two concerts in the theatre precisely at the time of the death of Holtei's wife, the consequences of which bereavement had led to Wagner's own starting on his desperate road to Paris. In the midst of "plaudit-seeking virtuosi with their dishonouring *airs variés*, their fantaisies and *polacca guerrieras*," the appearance of this sympathetic youngster was a veritable balm. His début at the Conservatoire concert of Jan. 10, with a grand violin-concerto of his own composition, won from Wagner these words of warmest approbation: "So one man has dared to restore his art to that dignity from which it had been so shamefully debased; to place himself before the jaded ears of the crowd with a noble, sterling piece of music, purely and chastely conceived, performed with life and freshness,—a composition for which he claims the exclusive attention of his audience, and to which he manifestly welds his art of virtuoso with a single eye to lifting his work to an ideal understanding" (*P. W.* VIII. 117). But the prettiest among his several references, and that which points most clearly to an intimacy, is where he relates how Vieuxtemps, supposed to be lodging opposite, had seen him come home tired out with listening to bravura feats: "Humanitarian that he is, he came across with his fiddle, sat down by my bed-side, and played me something *gratis*. I fell into a lovely sleep; delicious dreams came over me; I heard the voice of Goethe singing, 'Schwindet, Ihr dunkeln Wölbungen droben,' and in broad daylight I saw in heaven's heart that star which drenched my soul like the blessing-freighted eye of Mozart. All grew bright and happy; when I awoke, the player was standing by me, as though he had just fulfilled a work of mercy. I thanked him, and we spoke of it no more" (*ibid.* 127). Fond as Wagner was of talking, the highest mark of his approval is always contained in that recurrent closing formula, "Not another word."—This was in the Spring of 1841, from which time also dates a joint greeting of "Vieuxtemps and friend Kietz" to Ferdinand Heine. Soon afterwards Vieuxtemps left Paris, to extend his conquests to England, and the friends did not meet again till a few years later in Dresden; after that, at Zurich 1852—on which latter occasion Wagner once more expresses his admiration in a leaderette in the *Eidgenössische Zeitung*.

Presently we have another figure introduced, by way of caricature, indirectly concerned with that projected Life of Beethoven: this is Anton Schindler, of whom rumour says that he had his visiting-cards printed with "Ami de Beethoven." Wagner calls him "Beethoven's man in the flesh—*Schindler*, the intimate Schindler." "The intimate Schindler" is itself a volume of sarcasm compressed into one epithet, but Wagner is in a bantering mood, and gives us a line or two more of description: "the man is full of unction, and further bears a striking likeness to some Apostle whose face I can't quite call to mind. He has a brave appearance, mild manners and beaming eyes, wears a brown coat, and ordinarily Beethoven's portrait" (*ibid.* 129). The victim of this playful satire had just perpetrated his *Biographie Beethoven's mit Portrait und zwei Facsimiles* (1840), and had come to Paris to glean material for its sequel, *Beethoven in Paris* (1842). Unfortunately in the book first-named he had chosen to fall foul of Anders, who had recently issued a brochure for the benefit of the Beethoven memorial containing a French translation of Ries and Wegeler's *Biographische Notizen über Beethoven.* Anders was justly indignant at being openly accused of falsification, and his annoyance appears to have filtered to the ears of Schindler; for, as Wagner humorously puts it, "When the Man of Beethoven reached Paris, he was so agreeable as to invite Anders to a conference, with the object of radically proving to him the truth of his assertion. The conference took place [evidently in the presence of Wagner]; it was a dreary day, and Schindler in a surprisingly mild mood. After Anders had demonstrated to him line by line that he had not allowed himself the smallest material addition to the original Notices, the beaming eyes of Beethoven's Man ran over, and in an excess of tameness he seized Anders by the hand, assuring him that, *had he known him*, he could never have permitted himself that little jest; moreover, he solemnly promised him a brilliant reparation in the second edition of his book. . . . How great is the docility of Schindler, how strongly developed the bump of his astounding logic. It therefore pains me to see him bootlessly squandering his eminent elucidative powers on the incorrigible Parisians. May his good angel waft him soon from hence!" (*ibid.* 130). The amusing part of it is, that Schindler was so impervious to sarcasm as actually to go out of his way to praise the very articles

in one of which he had been so bear-baited: "Herr Wagner's correspondence-reports pre-eminently merit the attention of musical Germany; he always keeps to the matter in hand, which he thoroughly understands, and loves to speak the truth out freely, according to his best conviction." Is this another "brilliant reparation," or a ponderous attempt at repartee?

In this same Spring, to judge by the first of the letters (Mar. 24, 1841) in their published Correspondence, Wagner appears to have paid a second visit to Liszt. The more one thinks of it, the more one is inclined to believe that it is to this that the passage already quoted from the *Communication* refers. In any case, the letter itself is so enigmatic, that it is impossible to guess the visit's object; perhaps, though this is pure conjecture, it was to woo Liszt's influence for the *Rienzi* scheme. It would be of no great consequence, were it not the first link in an ever-memorable chain, and further remarkable for Liszt's having *preserved* it. How many a stranger must have written to the fêted artist in a similar strain! There must have been something about Wagner that sub-consciously impressed Liszt at the time, for him not to have destroyed this first epistle. But there was still a great gulf set between them, the yawning gulf of Paris. How nearly it devoured them both, in opposite ways! On April 24 Liszt gave his grand concert, conducted by Berlioz, for Beethoven's memorial: we have already quoted the remarks it drew from Wagner anent Liszt's genius, so let us view the darker side. "The programme consisted of nothing but Beethoven's compositions: nevertheless the fatal public demanded with a voice of thunder Liszt's *tour-de-force par excellence*, the fantaisie on Robert the Devil. There was no escape for the gifted man; so, with chagrined words, '*Je suis le serviteur du public; cela va sans dire!*' he sat down again to the piano, and played the favourite piece with crashing brilliance. Thus is each crime avenged on earth. Some day in Heaven, Liszt will have to perform that piece before the assembled public of the angels. Mayhap it will be for the very last time" (*P. W.* VIII. 137).

More and more thoroughly each day was Wagner disgusted with Paris and his former "monstrous aspirations of conquering" it. In a passage in the *Fatalities*, which clearly bears a personal application, he says: "Such wishes generally lead to the most desperate ennui; then the arts of Liszt and Chopin, the tones of

Duprez and the Dorus-gras, eh! even Rubini's immortal trills, are seldom able to dispel a tedium they far more frequently increase. What a mercy, when Spring appears, and gives one a pretext for fleeing from Paris with its unspeakable temptations and stupefying din; after a winter passed in hard abstentions, the German yearns for the tranquil joys of country life."

But where to find country near Paris? For miles around the land was occupied by the villas of ex-ministers and plutocrats. At last he hit on Meudon. Gasperini informs us that at that time there were quite a number of pretty little houses lying back from the road between Meudon and Bellevue, only a few paces from the magnificent park. Wagner took lodgings in one of these, Avenue de Meudon 3. "How I breathed again," he continues in the work last-quoted, "for to have no neighbours is a privilege one learns in Paris first to prize." The account that follows, of his landlord's little ways, is most amusing, but too obviously a caricature to be impressed into our service: its moral, which will be endorsed by most people, is that even in the country, unless one happens to be a millionaire, one cannot be quit of noise.

Wagner removed to Meudon at the end of April (29th), but it was some time before he could settle down again to solid work. His beloved *Freischütz* is about to be performed for the first time at the Grand Opéra, and he is horrified to hear that it is to be provided with recitatives and made generally amenable to the "statutes" of that institution; so he sets to work and writes a most charming article for the Gazette (appearing May 23). He fears, and justly, that the French won't understand the subject of this opera, and he therefore narrates the legend for them with all that idyllic poetry of which he was so great a master when he chose; then he makes bold to express his dread of the crushing effect of grand ballets and elaborate declamation upon its simple texture; and winds up with a cry from the heart: "Ah! would ye, could ye, hear and see our own true 'Freischütz,' perhaps ye then might feel what fills me now with mournful visions, might strike a friendship with that quiet trend which lures the German from the life of great cities to Nature, to the Forest-solitude, there to revive those inborn feelings for which your very language has no words." Thus he strikes with unfailing accuracy of aim at

the radical difference between the French, or rather the Parisians, and the people of his fatherland, emphasising the very instinct that has temporarily driven him out of Paris.

The first two months of his Meudon outing were not to be devoted to that "quiet trend." Almost from day to day we can follow him through his business cares. A torn sheet of paper dated May the 4th has come down to us, bearing on the one side a suggestion for the full cast of *Rienzi*, on the other a jumble of disconnected sentences, the names of Berlioz, Liszt and Chopin, and amid it all the ejaculation, "My God, why ever are we so unspeakably unlucky?" Obviously this was commenced as a string of notes for that news-letter of May 5 to the *Abendzeitung*, which treats of Liszt and Berlioz. On the 7th of May we have a covering private letter to the Hofrath, containing the last exhaustive plan for the Beethoven biography, with a request that Winkler will use his influence to gain over Arnold for the undertaking; at its close he refers to *Rienzi*: "It is of incalculable importance to me to know soon—*very soon*—whether my opera has been definitely accepted and set down for performance." The next few days must have been devoted to the second of his pair of articles for the *Europa*, the *Parisian Fatalities*, for which he retains the ironical pseudonym adopted with the first, "W. Freudenfeuer" (best translated into French, "Feu de joie"). On the 25th of the month, three days after a cheerless birthday, he returns to the charge with another letter to the Dresden management, determined to hasten a decision, however it may fall out. Then comes a hearty epistle to Reissiger, an endeavour to enlist his mediation: he cannot understand why Herr von Lüttichau has not declared his intentions; he asks for nothing beyond a definite answer, whether L. will give the opera or *not*, —"As for the state of mind of a private Parisian composer in summer and the country, you and Hofrath W. may perhaps be a little wrong in supposing it much cheerfuler than the Paris atmosphere had left it. . . . If you and Herr v. L. could only gaze into the curious mesh of miseries, hopes, outlooks, follies, plans, distractions, etc., that constitutes my present situation, I am perfectly certain you would know at once whether you ought to vouchsafe me an immediate Yes or No."

From time to time the young master had to break his retirement by a business visit to town. There still exists the draft of

a French letter in which he begs from the management of the Opéra the favour of a ticket for their first performance of *Der Freischütz* (June 7, 1841), requesting them to acquaint him the day *before* the performance, and to despatch the ticket itself "au magazin de Mr Maurice" Schlesinger. The *first* performance in France of Weber's most popular work, twenty years after date! Not that it had been altogether overlooked in Paris, for Castil Blaze had transmogrified it into a *Robin des bois* at the Opéra Comique; but that was something beneath contempt. Now the French were to have the *Freischütz* "as it is"; in fact, a little more so. Pacini had translated the text as faithfully as possible, whilst Berlioz had added lengthy recitatives, also ballet-music compiled from other works of Weber's. The result had been foreseen by Wagner; how far his fears were justified, may be gathered from his intensely comical report to Germany (*P. W.* VII.). Yet money was coined by the work—which went through twelve repetitions down to August; and Wagner thought that some of this golden stream should be diverted into the rightful channel. From Dresden he had heard of the financial straits of the heirs of his "beloved model," and at once he took the affair into his own hands. He posted off again to Paris, and button-holed the Director of the Opéra. Léon Pillet, the gentleman in question, was willing enough to assent to his proposals; only, the *droits d'auteur* having already been ceded to the "arrangers," the ordinary receipts could not possibly stand a further tax. However, there might be another way open: if Frau von Weber would write a letter asking for it, he, Pillet, might arrange a special performance for the benefit of her late husband's heirs, and hand over to them half the takings, estimated at from five to ten thousand francs. It was on July 1 that Wagner received this personal intimation, and, without waiting to return to Meudon, at once sent off the news to Dresden. His letter, addressed to Hofrath Winkler as trustee of the Weber family, is now in the hands of M. Alfred Bovet of Valentigney, and runs as follows: "For my part I should be only too happy, if I could be of any use in this affair; which might be possible, as Herr Pillet has some reason to consider me a little, especially in my second capacity, that of literary man, or rather, journalist. You see, as I myself have started the ball, it would be the easiest thing for me to expose him, were he to display no earnest desire to fulfil the

hopes he has now thrown out,—though I really have no ground to fear that." *

Considering the ridiculous charge of "boundless egoism" so frequently levelled at Wagner, mainly by people unworthy to loose his shoe-latchet, it is a matter for some congratulation to be able to produce this document from a time when all his energies were needed to stave off the wolf from his own door. The day before (June 30), after waiting five whole weeks for an answer to his last petition, he had sent off another, a still more urgent letter to the directorate of the Dresden Court-theatre. It was crossed by the answer so long delayed, the definite intimation by von Lüttichau that *Rienzi* had been accepted at last! Thus was his unselfish action unconsciously rewarded. He must have received the letter almost immediately on his return to Meudon, for it is dated June the 29th. Its substance is as under:—

> The textbook and score of your opera *Riensi* having been carefully examined, I have the pleasure to inform you of the acceptance of this your opera. It will be presented at the Royal Court-theatre as soon as possible, let us hope *in the course of next winter*.

We may imagine the effect of this almost despaired-of stroke of fortune on the struggling man. At last his first ambitious work had been accepted, and that at one of the chief court-theatres in Germany! "This acceptance," he says himself in after years, "broadly-speaking meant for me an almost amazingly encouraging omen, and withal a friendly greeting from Germany that made my feelings all the warmer for my native home, as the worldly blast of Paris was daily freezing me the more. Already with all my hopes and all my thoughts I lived in Germany alone; an ardent, yearning patriotism awoke within me, such as I had never dreamt before" (*P. W.* I. 310). It was enough to turn his head; but it simply set him to work in earnest once again. He well might deem it worth returning to creative work, with such a prospect opened out.

It will be remembered that the affair of the original *Flying Dutchman* draft had been left in suspense, as Wagner could not see his way just then to parting with the subject. At the same last interview with Pillet (a day or two before the recent glorious

* Owing to a chapter of accidents, or negligences, on every side but Wagner's, the Benefit never came off,—see *Letters to Uhlig &c.*, pp. 449-50.

news) when he had interceded for the heirs of Weber, he himself had a bitter pill to swallow. He had previously learnt in a round-about way that, whether he consented or not, it would make no difference—his draft was already handed to Paul Foucher for versification,* prior to being given to another composer to set to music. So he took the bull by the horns, and agreed to sell the draft and right of performance *at the Paris Opéra* for 500 fr. (£20)—apparently reserving the liberty to make use of his subject elsewhere. At anyrate the money would relieve some of his instant cares, and clear a breathing-space. Coming almost simultaneously with the acceptance of *Rienzi*, it was relief and incentive in one, and he lost no time in turning his latest subject into German verse.

"It was the first folk's-poem that forced its way into my heart, and called on me as man and artist to point its meaning and mould it to a work of art. From here begins my career as *poet*, my farewell to the mere concoctor of opera-texts," the author says in his *Communication*, but hastens to add: "In it there is so much as yet inchoate, the joinery of the situations is for the most part so imperfect, the verse and diction so often void of individual stamp, that our modern playwrights will be the first to count my designation a piece of impudence demanding strenuous punishment. . . . The form of this poem, however, as that of all my later ones, was dictated solely by the subject-matter, insomuch as that had become a definite possession of my life, and insofar as I had gained any general aptitude for artistic construction." In other words, he had begun to have a dim idea of his own peculiar path in Drama, and followed it according to his present lights.

The poem completed post-haste, the next thing was to hire a piano, to assist its musical composition: after three quarters of a year, Wagner felt he needed to work himself back into a musical mood. "When the piano arrived," as he says in the *Autobiographic Sketch*, "my heart beat fast for very fear; I dreaded to

* Paul Foucher, brother-in-law of Victor Hugo, had already written, or lent his name to, a round fifty pieces of the most varied description for the Paris boulevard-theatres; to the text of the *Vaisseau fantôme*, subsequently set to music by Pierre Dietsch (a miserable failure) he appears to have merely lent his name, according to the fashion satirised by Wagner on page 160 of Vol. VIII. of the *Prose Works*.

discover that I had ceased to be a musician. I began with the Sailors' Chorus and the Spinning-song; it flew as if on wings, and I shouted for joy at the feeling within me that I still was a musician." He had an audience, too; for sister Cäcilie, with her husband and baby son, had taken lodgings close by for the summer. "My parents," says F. Avenarius, "were present at those first rehearsals. It was in a little room whose only furniture consisted of that hired piano, a couple of tables and a few chairs. My parents have told me how, after bursting into loud exclamations of joy, he turned to them with 'Eh! Doesn't that sound something like?' Then a knock came at the door: M. Jadin the landlord, an old original amusingly described by Wagner, had sent up a message requesting to stop that sort of strumming"—the very earliest criticism on the music of the *Flying Dutchman*.

If it was in a sorrowful mood that Wagner first conceived the subject of his latest work, "all the irony, all the bitter sarcasm which in a kindred plight is all that remains to our literary poets to spur them on to work"—as he says with obvious allusion to Heine's treatment of the subject—he had already put behind him in his literary articles, and could yield himself without reserve to "the good angel which preserved me as an artist, nay, which really made me first an artist when my soul commenced to revolt with greater energy against the whole condition of our modern art. . . . That good angel was Music" (*P. W.* I. 304-5). And that good angel helped him valiantly, for, "I had only to take the various thematic germs in Senta's Ballad [already composed] and develop them to their legitimate conclusions, and I had all the chief-moods of this poem, quite of themselves, in definite thematic shapes before me. It would have been deliberately to follow the example of the arbitrary opera-composer, had I chosen to invent a fresh musical motive for each recurrence of one and the same mood in different scenes; a course toward which I did not feel the least temptation, as I had only in mind the most intelligible portrayal of the subject, not a mere conglomerate of operatic numbers" (*ibid.* 370). It is significant of this spontaneous origin, that he also tells us he felt strongly inclined to entitle the finished work "a dramatic ballad."

In the above self-criticism we see the genesis of what has since been called the *Leitmotiv*, or "leading motive" principle. Like everything else in a nascent stage, its application to the

Flying Dutchman was somewhat elementary, and necessarily eked out by expedients from the Operatic school. Still, the great reform of musical drama had been commenced, and that wellnigh unconsciously. So little reflection was there in the process, that the whole music (with exception of the overture) was composed in seven weeks. The last page of the completed draft bears the date September 13, 1841; the title-page a motto strikingly descriptive of his own situation: "In night and sorrow. *Per aspera ad astra.* God grant it. R. W."

Once more he was overwhelmed with troubles, and it was two full months before he could commence to write his *Dutchman* overture. Pecht tells us of a heart-rending letter sent him in these days from Meudon—unfortunately destroyed, with other of Wagner's letters, by a fire in Pecht's father's house. In strangely vivid contrast, the Gazette Musicale publishes at this very time (Oct. 18, 24, and Nov. 7) Wagner's *Une Soirée heureuse: fantaisie sur la musique pittoresque*—"A happy evening"—the style of which seems to point to an earlier, more cheerful epoch. It certainly does not reflect his state of mind at the hour of its appearance, for the dilatory progress of affairs in Dresden is simply torturing him. True, at the end of August or beginning of September he hears from Winkler that his *Rienzi* will be taken in hand immediately after the production of a new opera by Reissiger; but down to the middle of October nothing more definite has been reported to him. Naturally he is impatient to know *how* such an elaborate work is to be mounted, cast, etc., etc., for on that depends its failure or success; so the twin letters of Sep. 7 to W. Fischer and F. Heine are followed on Oct. 14 by a triplet addressed to Reissiger and the two last-named, all dated from Meudon, all breathing the same anxiety about a matter that to him is of vital importance.

Meanwhile autumn winds and chilly nights have driven him from his country retreat (the last set of letters announced Oct. 25 as the latest date on which an answer would reach him at Meudon), and he has returned to Paris, now putting up at 14 Rue Jacob. "Should you have wished mere news about the autumn in and round Paris," he commences a news-letter dated Nov. 5 to the *Abendzeitung*, "I could have placed myself at your command some time ago. I would have told you of fearsome soughing and howling of the most autumnal and most obstinate

of all the winds, which for three full moons has stormed throughout the Paris district,—of merrily flickering chimney-fires, of mournfully fluttering leaves of trees, of sturdily streaming floods of rain—so that you should recall the best of Hoffmann's fairy-tales"—or his own *Flying Dutchman*, the overture and scoring of which must have been undertaken somewhere about this time. Hazard has preserved a sheet of paper evidently used as a pad, or support for the hand when writing the above: while a perfect coruscation of wit and sarcasm is being fired off for the public, the pen half-mechanically splutters on to the auxiliary sheet all kinds of melancholy private interjections, among which the name of Rothschild occurs quite half a score of times, once with the after-cry "O millions, golden shiners!"

On the 24th of November the young master kept the fifth anniversary of his wedding-day, in care and want. What an unbroken chain of troubles, trials, barren hopes, and plans frustrated, hung between! Poor Minna must have felt the hardships of their daily life even more keenly than himself; but that only made matters worse,—Wagner needed a helpmate of tougher metal than the pretty little lady whom we have just seen almost swooning away at a concert's failure; the domestic virtues of economy and order are not the only ones demanded of the wives of workers; a little cheerful female bravery, a measure of sympathy held out to aims beyond her understanding, would have been a welcome increase to her dowry. If *she* had to scrape and moil to make both ends meet, her husband had to labour by the sweat of his brow to procure "the necessary wherewithal" for his return to Germany. "I was obliged for its sake," he tells us in the *Communication*, "to betake myself once more to hack-work for the music-sellers. I made arrangements from Halévy's [and other] operas. Yet a new-won pride already saved me from the bitterness this humiliation had inspired in me before."

On the first of December we have Wagner appearing in a new capacity, that of "art-critic" in the sense which vulgarly restricts the term to a reporter on paintings or sculpture. Through Kietz he had been admitted to the private view of a great mural picture which had taken Delaroche four years to paint. The locality was the room appointed for distribution of prizes in the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and the subject a classical treatment of that act itself.

Those who are curious as to how Richard Wagner acquits himself in this department, will find the criticism, or rather the appreciation, on pages 165-6 of Vol. VIII. of the Prose Works; it naturally is directed more to the idea and composition of the picture, than to technical details. At this private view he was witness of an affecting scene, when Delaroche entered the room, received the clamorous congratulations of his pupils, and with tears in his eyes gave off a little speech in which he urged them all to "courage and perseverance." Three weeks later, in course of a criticism of Scribe's *Une chaîne*, Wagner wishes his countrymen "would copy the Frenchman's *diligence*; for I am persuaded that, next to their great talent, the actors of the Théâtre Français owe the fine perfection of their ensemble mainly to their exemplary diligence." The words of Delaroche had fallen on a quick ear; the instance is a minor one, yet sufficiently symptomatic of the promptness with which Wagner would always seize a point, to extend its application. But if his penetration of the secret of French acting was due to the hint of an artist in another branch, his probing of the secret of French comedy is all his own: "When I saw this piece of Scribe's performed by the actors of the Théâtre Français it became clear to me why we Germans have no Comedy worth the name, and why the French will always have to help us out. 'Tis the whole thing: Paris, its salons, countesses, boulevards, lawyers, doctors, grisettes, maîtresses, journals, cafés—in short, just Paris itself, that makes these comedies; Scribe and his friends are really nothing more than clerks, amanuenses of that great, that million-headed playwright."

For all its supremacy in comedy, perhaps because of it, he was longing to escape from Paris: "It was the feeling of utter homelessness, that roused my yearning for the German homeland; yet this longing was not directed to any old familiar haunt that I must win my way *back* to, but onward to a country pictured in my dreams, an unknown and still to be discovered haven, of which I knew this thing alone—that I certainly should *never* find it in Paris" (*P. W.* I. 310). As he goes on to say, it was the longing of his Vanderdecken; with the scoring of whose drama he was even now engaged, in whatever moments could be spared between writing private letters to Dresden about the interminable preliminaries for *Rienzi*, and public letters about what was going on in Paris.

In the latter category we have two delightful articles. The first, perhaps the wittiest of all his literary products, is an airy persiflage of Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and its dilettantist audience (contributed to Schumann's *Neue Zeitschrift*): it would be hard to beat the sentence in which he says that nothing had been heard of Rossini for ten long years, since "he sat in Bologna, ate pastry, and made wills"; or the delicious scene that follows it, where the Italian maëstro and the banker Aguinaldo are supposed to take a drive together "in a well-appointed chariot" and suddenly seek absolution for their sins. In fact the seven pages of this pasquinade are crammed with spice and humour. Dated December the 15th, it is signed "H. Valentino," thus completing the joke by borrowing the name of the conductor at the Salle S. Honoré who had murdered the *Columbus* overture.

The second of these winter articles was written the last day of Wagner's last year in Paris. Dealing with the première of the *Reine de Chypre* (Dec. 22, 1842), which he necessarily had to attend in his twofold capacity of pianoforte-arranger and reviewer, he has a slap at the fatuity of German librettists and the eagerness of German Directors for the latest Paris novelty. A word of characterisation is devoted to Schlesinger, "with the black hair and never-resting eye, full at once of nervousness and admiration, examining his neighbour's features for the effect of the last aria, and at the selfsame instant praising up its glorious theme. 'Tis no other than the music-publisher, who has already paid the composer 30,000 fr. in cash for his right to the score." But Schlesinger's portrait has a more interesting pendant, that of Richard Wagner himself: "Do you see the young musician there, with pale cheeks and a devouring look in the eye? Breathless he listens to the performance, gulps down the outcome of each single number: is it enthusiasm, or jealousy? Ah! 'tis the care for daily bread. Should the new opera prove a success, he has reason to hope that publisher will give him orders for fantasias and airs variés on its 'favourite melodies'" (*P. W.* VII. 207). This opera is also briefly mentioned in a news-letter of Dec. 23, where the *Abendzeitung* is informed, in passing, that it "won a marked success," and in a letter to the *Zeitschrift* dated Feb. 5—"Halévy's *Reine de Chypre* is not bad; some of it beautiful, much of it trivial." A longer report, that to the *Gazette* we shall refer to in the order of its appearance.

1841 had come to a close, and with it the scoring of *Der fliegende Holländer*: "Naturally nothing now lay so much at my heart, as the wish to bring it to a speedy hearing in Germany. From Munich and Leipzig I had the disheartening answer: the opera was not at all fitted for Germany. Fool that I was! I had fancied it was fit for Germany alone, as it struck chords that can vibrate only in the German breast." Not to be daunted, he next tried Berlin, sending his score with a covering letter to Graf von Redern, the Intendant there, to whom he had already addressed himself provisionally from Meudon soon after the Dresden acceptance of *Rienzi*. A year ago the Prussian throne had been ascended by Friedrich Wilhelm IV., who enjoyed the reputation of being a highly-cultured prince; his proclaimed intention to raise Berlin to the rank of the metropolis of German art and science inspired Wagner with the best of hopes. Those hopes find expression in a missive to the King of the same date as the letter to Redern. Wagner begins with an allusion to the need of a resolute and powerful patron of Art in the German fatherland, at a time of such subservience to foreign influence; so far had it gone, that men of parts, especially musicians, had had to seek their livelihood abroad—in Paris; how many a talent must therefore still lie slumbering, or almost have rotted away! But, he proceeds, the King's own promise to protect the arts has sounded forth, and every day brings fresh and varied proof of how His Majesty intends to keep it; relying upon that, and conscious of the uprightness of his own endeavour, he begs the King's protection of his latest work.

It is characteristic, that Wagner should have sent his spectacular *Rienzi* to the Dresden court, with its traditional love of splendour,—his far more Germanic *Holländer* to a court where "German culture" was now professedly the order of the day. But alas! Berlin also had its traditions. Just as Frederick the Great once rejected Lessing's application for the post of Librarian, and appointed a French nonentity instead, so his august descendant fancied he had done enough for German music when he made two aliens, Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn, his Generalmusikdirektors. The King of Prussia deigned no answer.

Another course lay open. For all his countless disillusions since setting foot in Paris, the young master had not quite lost his faith as yet in Meyerbeer's sincerity. What more natural,

than to appeal for his assistance at the Berlin theatre, where the composer of the *Huguenots* was all-powerful? To have omitted to do so, might have been construed as a slight. So Wagner begs his somewhat lukewarm patron to throw his weight into the scale with Count Redern. He receives from Meyerbeer a brief assurance of his recommendation, and replies with effusive gratitude: "Two words from you have made me happy again, and thoroughly reconciled me to my fate. . . . Poor fool that I am, always working for the future, and hearing, seeing nothing, eh! barely existing, in the present—I was sitting in my den with my poor tormented wife, and looking at the harvest of the last outlived, or rather racked-out summer. That harvest, a stupid textbook and a fair-sized score, lay before me dumbly asking what was to become of them. I could think of nothing more sensible, than to pack them up and enclose them with a deferential note to Graf von Redern; I knew they would simply moulder there, but nothing better could I think of. Then the evangel was opened to me, for there stood written by your honoured hand 'I will endeavour to secure it with the Graf von Redern'!!—Ah! if you knew what a measureless boon you have thereby conferred on me."* Joy and gratitude had really run a little too far ahead, and ere long the writer had to learn that "the acceptance of this opera by the Berlin Court-theatre directorate had been nothing more than a cheap and artificial compliment" (*P. W.* I. 319). That knowledge mercifully denied him for the present, he could now look forward to the production of two important works of his at two large theatres, and involuntarily reflect on the strangeness of the fact that Paris, despite its dashing of his local hopes, had been of the greatest use to him for Germany.

Unfortunately, Dresden continued to try his patience week by week and month by month. The official acceptance of his *Rienzi* had spoken of its production in course of this winter; but the necessity of first rehearsing a new opera of Reissiger's, *Adèle de*

* The above extracts go to confirm the opinion expressed by Mr Houston Stewart Chamberlain with reference to many of Richard Wagner's letters, namely that it would be absurd to judge by *them* the value of the addressee, for "genius is creative, not only in its works of art, but in its daily intercourse"; in other words, the master often idealised his correspondents. As to the present instance, see Appendix.

Foix (produced Nov. 26, 1841)* and after that Halévy's *Guitarrero*, and after that again an opera of Mercadante's for sake of a touring prima donna—had already half devoured the winter season. "If it should occur to another 'star' to cross my path, or should things succeed each other at this rate, so that my opera cannot come out before Easter," he writes to F. Heine Jan. 4, 1842, "I foresee with mournful certainty that the word will be, 'It's too late now. Next winter.' But if you or any other person exactly realised how my whole situation, all my plans, and all my resolutions are ruined by such procrastination, some pity surely would be shewn me. Should it really come to this, that my opera must be wholly laid aside this winter season, I should indeed be inconsolable; and *he* or *she* who might be to blame, would have incurred a grave responsibility, perhaps for untold sorrows caused me." On the 17th of the month Councillor Winkler pacifies him with a letter about the great splendour with which *Rienzi* is to be staged, "two new scenes, and costumes estimated at 537," but at the same time announces the dreaded postponement; which Wagner, contrary to what might have been expected, treats with philosophic composure (see letter to Fischer of Feb. 5). Like the eel, he is getting used to skinning.

Meantime the creative region of his brain has not lain idle. Two major works have been accepted — the founders of his future fame—and already he is planning others. How little 'reflective' had been his choice of a legendary subject with the *Flying Dutchman*, is proved by his going to history for its immediate successor, though the opera was never really carried out. Those who have read his first report on Halévy's *Reine de Chypre* (*P. W.* VII.) will remember his half-jocular advice to German librettists: "If you *have* the knack, you must go read journals, novels, books, above all the great book of History. You'll not have far to seek before you find a half or whole page that tells you of some strange event. Ponder this event a little; draw three or even five bold lines across it, which you may call *acts* if you please; give each of these acts its due share of the action, make this interesting . . . and before one can turn one's

* "My quondam colleague in the Dresden Kapellmeistership, the departed Gottlieb Reissiger, once bitterly complained to me that the identical melody which in Bellini's *Romeo e Giulia* always sent the audience mad, in his own *Adèle de Foix* made no effect whatever" (*P. W.* VI. 145—written 1879).

wrist you'll have an operatic subject to the full as good as any for which our German musicians besiege Parisian text-wrights." In his *Communication* (1851) he tells us how he followed his own advice—or more probably anticipated it:* "I turned the pages of the book of History, to *seek* again an operatic subject. . . . At last I fastened on one episode that seemed to offer me the chance of giving freer rein to my poetic fancy. This was a moment from the last days of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Manfred, son of Friedrich II., tears himself from his luxurious lethargy, and throws himself into Luceria, assigned by his father to the Saracens after their dislodgment from Sicily; chiefly by aid of these warlike sons of Araby, he wins back from the Pope and ruling Guelphs the whole of the disputed realm of Sicily and Apuleia. Into this purely historic plot I wove an imaginary female figure: her form had taken shape in my mind from the memory of an engraving, seen long before, representing Friedrich II. surrounded by his almost exclusively Arabian court, with singing and dancing women.† The spirit of this Friedrich, my favourite hero, I now embodied in the person of a Saracen maiden, born during the Kaiser's peaceful halt in Palestine. Tidings of the downfall of the Ghibelline house have come to the girl in her native home; she makes her way to Apuleia. Here she appears at Manfred's court, inspires him by her prophecies, and spurs him on to action. Spreading enthusiasm wherever she goes, she kindles the Arabs in Luceria, and leads the Kaiser's son through victory after victory to throne. She has kept her parentage a secret, the better to work upon Manfred by the mystery of her apparition; he falls passionately in love with her, and fain would break the secret's seal: she waves him back with an oracular saying. His life attempted, she receives the blow in her own breast: dying, she confesses herself his sister. Manfred, crowned, takes leave of happiness forever." ‡

* The date of the first draft of *Die Sarazenin* cannot be established to a nicety; all that can be said for certain, is that its plot was conceived in the winter of 1841-2.

† It is also possible that Wagner had read or heard of Immermann's drama, *Kaiser Friedrich II.*, in which the two sons of the Kaiser, Enzio and Manfred, both fall in love unwittingly with their sister Roxelane. To this hypothesis, however, we cannot assign much weight.

‡ In Vol. VIII. of the *Prose Works* will be found the full text of the libretto constructed on these lines in 1843.

All thoughts of proceeding farther with *Die Sarazenin* were promptly thrust into the background when the old *Tannhäuser-Lied* fell into his hands, as if by providential chance, and immediately usurped his fancy. It will be remembered that he had made acquaintance with Tieck's version of the story in his youth; it had then "aroused his interest in the same fantastic fashion as Hoffmann's tales," but made no deep impression on him. "I now read through Tieck's utterly modern poem again, and understood at once why his coquetry with mysticism and catholicism had not appealed to my sympathy; the folk's-book * and the homely *Lied* with its simple genuine poetry explained this point to me" (*P. W.* I. 311-2). Wagner goes on to relate how he had found Tannhäuser connected in this enigmatic "folk's-book," though very loosely, with the Minstrels' Contest at Wartburg; but no inquiries have as yet been able to substantiate either the one point or the other. True, a certain E. T. L. Lucas had endeavoured to prove the identity of Tannhäuser with Heinrich von Ofterdingen in course of a learned pamphlet *Ueber den Krieg auf Wartburg* published at Königsberg in 1838. Possibly Wagner had heard something of this, but in any case it is to his own creative genius that must be attributed the welding of these two characters and stories into one inseparable whole: the old legend of Tannhäuser and the Venusberg had nothing whatever to do with the Minstrels' Contest, whose hero is Heinrich von Ofterdingen.—He continues (still in 1851): "With this second subject, also, I had already made acquaintance, through a tale of Hoffmann's; but, just as with Tieck's Tannhäuser, it had left me without the smallest incentive to dramatic treatment." Luckily, one of his friends, the "German philologist" Lehrs, happened to possess a copy of the old Middle-high-German poem of the *Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg*, and lent it to Wagner, on whom it "breathed the air of home," the home whence sprang *Der Freischütz*. Now, "this poem is set in direct conjunction with an epos of *Lohengrin*. That also I studied, and thus at one blow a whole new world of poetic matter was opened out to me; a world of which in my previous hunt for

* This "folk's-book" is untraceable; Herr Glasenapp thinks it may have been the *Deutsche Sagen* of the brothers Grimm. In *The Meister* No. XIV. (1891) will be found a review of Dr Wolfgang Golther's researches into the question (*Bayr. Bl.* 1889).—W. A. E.

operatic matter, mostly ready-made, I had not had the least conception." Thus the whole of what may be termed his Dresden crop lay already sown before he said goodbye to Paris.

Looking back at this brief, but most important stage in his development, we now observe that, having already embarked on his own new voyage of discovery with the *Holländer*, he was on the eve of a return to "grand" five-act "historic" Opera with his *Sarazenin* project, when rescue came to him in the shape of *Tannhäuser*. "That picture [of Manfred and Fatima] which my homesick brain had painted in the departing light of an historical sunset, not without a certain warmth of colour, completely faded from my sight so soon as ever the shape of Tannhäuser revealed itself to my inner eye. That picture had been conjured from outside; this shape sprang from my inmost heart. In its infinitely simple traits it was wider-embracing, to my mind, and alike more definite and plain, than the rich and shimmering tissue, half historical and half poetic, that concealed the supple human form my soul was longing for."

While this internal process was going on, affairs outside were not at an absolute standstill. At Dresden the friendly chorus-master Fischer was taking his people through the first stages of a general study of *Rienzi*; F. Heine, too, was busy at the sketches for those "537 new costumes." For his own part, impatient at his distance from the scene of action, or inaction, Wagner had fully made up his mind to leave Paris at Easter; the only question was, how to procure the necessary funds. As a help towards this he wrote the second of his two long articles on the *Reine de Chypre*: the first had been despatched to the Abendzeitung, this second one appeared in the Gazette Musicale of Feb. 27, March 13, April 24 and May 1.* Exactly when the beginning and end were written, we cannot say; but on the back of the twelfth page of the manuscript for the second instalment (according to the catalogue of an auction-sale in after years) occurs the following note: "Authorised by Herr Schlesinger,

* This article has not been included in the *Ges. Schr.*, perhaps on account of the German MS. having passed out of the author's possession (among Minna's papers?), perhaps because of its somewhat too lavish praise of Halévy; but an English rendering will be found in Vol. VIII. of the *Prose Works*. The Paris *Freischütz*, as will be remembered, was also the subject of two differently-destined articles.—W. A. E.

I send to Herr Duesberg [apparently the translator] the continuation of my article on Halévy, as it is to appear in the next number. . . . Paris, 26th February, 1842. Richard Wagner."

This second article on the *Reine de Chypre* is perhaps the most valuable, from an æsthetic standpoint, of all Wagner's writings of the Paris period, and for two reasons: firstly, since it contains the earliest definite statement of his requirements for a "perfect opera"; secondly, because of its pregnant criticism of the French operatic school. In its preamble will be found the memorable sentence: "To obtain a perfect work, it would be necessary that its idea should come at like time to the musician and the poet." Wagner admits that "this is a case almost unheard of," but does not consider it impossible—and no wonder, for already it was being realised, though the musician and poet were one person there. Then we have his first open advocacy of the freely-treated *legendary* subject: "Of a sudden some marvellous tradition conjures up before them figures vague, indefinite, but beautiful and enchanting: ravishing melodies, quite novel inspirations besiege their brain, like dreams and poetic forebodings. Then a name is uttered, a name from tradition or history, and with that name a full-fledged drama has occurred to them. 'Tis the poet who uttered it; for to him belongs the faculty of giving clear and definite form to what reveals itself to his fancy. But what weaves the charm of the ineffable round the poetic conception, what reconciles reality with the ideal,—the task of seizing that belongs to the musician." Here we have the manifesto of the poet-composer who at that very moment was building up, tho' only in his brain, the future *Tannhäuser*.

As to the second point, the criticism of the French school of Opera, it is significant that *not a word is said of Meyerbeer*, though his congener Halévy is held up as model for the younger French to follow. Auber comes in for high words of praise, as regards his earliest products; whilst the influence of the modern Italian masters is strongly deprecated,—so strongly, in fact, that the editor-in-chief excised a passage. What was the wording, or even the extent of that omitted portion, we shall never know until the private purchaser of the manuscript (whoever he may be) shall consider that the disbursement of 150 marks does not entitle him to withhold the information from those most interested in such

matters. Too many a private document of Wagner's has been impertinently dragged to light of day, against all right or usage; but here is a case where the master himself desired a public verdict, as may be gathered from the following episode. Thirty years later he tells us in his article on *Auber*: "When reviewing a new opera of Halévy's for the 'Gazette Musicale' I took occasion to rank French operatic music above the Italian. With entire sincerity I deplored the emasculation of taste at the Grand Opéra, where Donizetti with his slipshod sickly mannerism was gaining more and more the upper hand, and crowding into the background the excellent beginnings of an individual, specifically French style in Grand Opera. I adduced the *Muette de Portici*, and asked how the acclimatised operas of Italian composers, of Rossini himself, compared with that work in point of dramatic style, or even of musical invention. Well, the passage in which I answered that question in favour of French music was suppressed by the editor, Ed. Monnais; at that time General Inspector of all the Royal theatres in France, he replied to my protest by saying that he could not possibly pass a sentence in which Rossini was criticised for the benefit of Auber. It was in vain that I appealed to his patriotic heart, which surely would feel pleased to see the merit and significance of its compatriot thus vaunted by a German. The answer was, if I wanted to enter the field of politics there were plenty of political journals at my disposal for pitting Auber against Rossini: in a *musical* paper such a thing could not possibly be permitted." Thus his very last contribution to a French journal was attended by the same misunderstanding as had dogged his footsteps everywhere in Paris.

Yes, the *Muette* was no longer to the taste of the Parisians; they gave it only as a 'scratch' performance, to stop a gap: if Wagner really wanted to be amused by Auber, he was advised to go and hear the *Domino noir*, or the *Diamants de la couronne*. People, in fact, were annoyed at being reminded of the July Revolution, though they had gone through the ceremony of re-interring its victims to the strains of Berlioz' symphony in July 1840. Wagner had heard this July Symphony at the time, and in his final Paris news-letter (Feb. 5, 1842, to the *Neue Zeitschrift*) he speaks of having heard it once again, at a concert of Berlioz's that "systematically drove the audience out of its

skin. Whoever had not wholly left his skin through boredom, was obliged to at the end of his apotheosis in the July Symphony —for very joy; in this last movement there are things which nothing could surpass for grandeur and simplicity. For all that, Berlioz stands quite alone in Paris."

Equally, or more alone stood Wagner. His disgust had reached its climax. His last words in the letter just-cited are: "How lucky it would be for us, to bid a last farewell to Paris. It has had a great epoch, which certainly has influenced us for good. But that's over now, and we must give up our belief in Paris. Presumably I shall not need to warn much longer." Such is his final verdict on the city to which he had come with soaring hopes, and where he had reaped nothing definite beyond a passion for his fatherland, since absence makes the heart grow fonder. He was about to return there with his quiver full: two operas completed, one of them Germanic to the core; in his head the plots for three additional German operas, two of which have since become the most generally admired of musical dramas throughout the world. Paris had had no hand in them, nor any one *in* Paris, as he seems to have now discovered; for the inner history of Meyerbeer's advocacy of *Rienzi* and the *Dutchman* would appear to have just been revealed to him. We have noticed that not a word was said about Meyerbeer in our hero's review of French Opera (*Gaz. Mus.*); a remark in that news-letter of Feb. 5 surely explains the omission. Speaking of Halévy, he says: "He is frank and honest; no sly, deliberate *filou* like M." Considering that barely a year ago Wagner had privately begged Schumann not to let Meyerbeer be run down so much in the *Neue Zeitschrift*, and that it was hardly a month since he had sent Meyerbeer a letter overflowing with gratitude, it is beyond conceivability that he should have written these words unless some crying proof of Meyerbeer's duplicity had recently come to his knowledge. The secret, perhaps, will never be known; but in that remark and its publicity we have good reason for concluding that the same machinations which eventually deferred the production of the *Holländer* at Berlin had something to do with the endless delays in the production of *Rienzi* at Dresden.

As fate would have it, besides the *Reine de Chypre* and *Zanetta*, Wagner had to pack the *Huguenots* and *Robert le diable* into his portmanteau in his preparations for departure. Degrading hack-

work pursued him to the bitter end. Money had been advanced by Schlesinger for another batch of 'arrangements,' and, while the advance enabled him to shake the dust of Paris from his feet, the badge of his former slavery must needs accompany him.*

On Thursday the 7th of April 1842, after more than two and a half years of residence, he left the French metropolis; toward the end of his twenty-ninth year of life; an altered man. "Children, "children!" he cries back to his faithful friends, upon his return to Germany, "How your Paris haunts me! That den of murderers where we, with our simple naïve aims, were hunted to death in silence and unheeded." With a huge sigh of relief he crossed the frontier: "For the first time in my life I saw the Rhine: with hot tears in my eyes, poor artist, I swore eternal fealty to my German Fatherland." The direct route to Dresden took him through the Thuringian valley from which one sees the Wartburg towering aloft. "Unspeakably homelike and inspiring was the effect upon me of that castle, already hallowed in my mind"—by Luther or the Elisabeth of his own *Tannhäuser*?

* See a letter to Uhlig of 1852, in which he adds that he afterwards returned the money, as that sort of work had become impossible to him in Germany.

XII.

DRESDEN.

Arrival in Dresden.—Summer at Teplitz.—Rehearsals and production of "Rienzi."—Excerpts at the Gewandhaus.—"The Flying Dutchman" produced at Dresden.—Offer of the Kapellmeistership: hesitation about accepting. — Trial-performance, Weber's "Euryanthe." — Trip to Berlin. — Wagner becomes Kapellmeister.

> *I, lonely, homeless waif, suddenly found myself beloved, admired, eh! looked upon by many with amazement; and according to general notions this success was to win me a life-long basis of solid social comfort, through my unexpected appointment to the post of Kapellmeister to the Royal Saxon Court-band.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER.

IT was five years since Wagner had visited the scene of his earliest recollections. On that flying trip to Dresden in 1837 he had received the first incentive to write the opera for whose production he now set foot in it again. After so long a spell of wandering, it seemed indeed like coming home, for a warm reception welcomed him. Schröder-Devrient was absent on leave, but Tichatschek was a host in himself, and Chorus-master Wilhelm Fischer sprang up to embrace him as soon as his name was announced. "I shall never forget that first kind deed," says the master seventeen years thereafter; "it was the first, the very first encouragement that had greeted the helplessly obscure, hard-pressed young artist on his path in life."

The study of *Rienzi* being set down for July, when he had gone through the regular introductions in Dresden he set off in May for Teplitz, where Minna was to take a 'cure' after all the exactions of Paris, and whence he himself made a few excursions to the surrounding Bohemian highlands.* Teplitz, which had once inspired the project of the *Liebesverbot*, now became the

* See Alois John's *R. Wagner in den deutsch-böhmischen Bädern*, a charming little pamphlet published at Teplitz in 1890.

birthplace of *Tannhäuser*, which had engrossed his mind during the last month or two in Paris. Before even *Rienzi* was set on the stage, he had completed the full scenic draft of his latest subject, and already made some jottings for its music. A sheet of paper, evidently dating from this summer outing, presents the first outline of musical themes and their destination, such as "Venusberg," "Pilgrims," "Finale of Second Act," "Opening of Third Act" etc. Another bears the solo for the goatherd's shawm, an entirely different setting from that eventually used. But jottings were as far as he could get for some time yet; the change in his entire position was too great and absorbing to allow of his settling down to serious work.

The stay at Teplitz was prolonged beyond his original intention; but there was no earthly reason for hurrying back to Dresden. In a letter to Fischer dated "Zur Eiche: Schönau, near Teplitz, July 7, 1842," he asks: "Have Mad. Devrient and Herr Tichatschek returned to Dresden yet, and are the parts of my miserable opera distributed?" He does not wish to seem too pressing, and "it is fairly indifferent" to him whether *Rienzi* comes off a month sooner or later; only, he is anxious that the rehearsals shall be in a forward state by the beginning of September, as Tichatschek has a fortnight's leave of absence in the latter half of that month. Fischer would appear to have been able to arrange this for him, as he returned to Dresden at the end of July for the commencement of rehearsing in earnest.

The orchestra of the Saxon Court-opera consisted of from 60 to 70 performers, a large body for that period, but with the 'strings' somewhat over-balanced by the 'wind.'* The violins were led by Konzertmeister Lipinski and his youthful colleague Franz Schubert; the 'celli by the admirable Dotzauer. The foundation of the string-quartet was composed of 4 contrabassists, one of whom, according to Berlioz, was too old to play a note, and only just able to support the weight of his instrument.† Fürstenau

* Then a common fault at German theatres. Berlioz increased the number of strings for his orchestral concerts at Leipzig just about this date, and thereby roused the ire of local critics: "Four-and-twenty violins, instead of the sixteen that had hitherto sufficed for the Symphonies of Mozart and Beethoven? What shameless presumption!" (*Voyage musical*, Letter 4).

† "In Germany I have often seen examples of this misplaced reverence for grey hairs, leading Kapellmeisters to entrust musical functions to men whose

took first flute; the oboist Hiebendahl, trumpeter Queisser, and horn-player Lewy, were all firstrate artists, unsurpassed on their respective instruments. The bass tuba not being represented in the regular band, a military player was imported when needed.—As to the Chorus, under "old Fischer," it was merely four-and-forty strong (13 sopranos, 9 contraltos, 12 tenors and 10 basses), though almost every voice in it was of exceptional quality and volume. The finales of the first three acts of *Rienzi* requiring several different groups of choristers, the garrison-choir founded by Fischer had to be drawn upon, as customary on such occasions; but even this was not sufficient, in the composer's eyes, to supply the chorus in the Lateran, "Erwacht ihr Schläfer, nah' und fern." In sketching this chorus he had counted on obtaining the services of the Kreuzschule boys, who in olden times had always sung the choruses in operas by Hasse and Naumann. Unfortunately Rector Gröbel (once Wagner's own headmaster) had objected to the proposal, and Wagner, before leaving Paris, had been in correspondence with Fischer as to the best way out of the difficulty: the expedient finally adopted was that of making one portion of the choir steal off, sing the great *a capella* double-chorus behind the wings, and return during an organ postlude.

To come to the soloists: Here the composer was fortunate indeed, with Joseph Tichatschek, the vocal wonder of his age, as Rienzi; Schröder-Devrient, an artist down to her finger-tips, as Adriano; and for Irene his young friend of former days, Henriette Wüst, owner of an expressive and well-trained soprano. To these protagonists we must add Michael Wächter (Orsini), Wilhelm Dettmer (Colonna), the young Reinhold and Karl Risse (Baroncelli and Cecco), and one of the veterans from Dresden's Italian Opera days Gioachino Vestri (Cardinal); whilst all these were good, even at the rehearsals the silvery tones of the débutante Anna Thiele produced an almost ethereal effect in the chorus of Envoys of Peace.

Many a paring and alteration had gone before; but so soon as the actual rehearsals began, the young master discovered more plainly every day what a friend and artist his work had won him in Tichatschek. The leading singer's enthusiasm for his rôle, for the whole work, was caught by all the others to such an

physical powers had long ceased to be equal to them" (*ibid.* Letter 5, beginning of 1843).

unusual degree that the public itself began to prick up its ears at the rumours it heard of this opera of a totally unknown composer. A pavilion of the Zwinger next to Prof. Hübner's studio (close to the ancient Nymphenbad) had been set apart for the ensemble rehearsals at the pianoforte, which Reissiger gladly relinquished to the author. Among other recollections of these rehearsals printed years afterwards by the singer of Irene, we read of an exciting incident that marred the even tenour of the scene between Adriano and Irene in the fifth act: Frau Schröder-Devrient, hasty as ever, had been unable to overcome certain difficulties of modulation; again and again the passage is gone through, till at last she crumples up her 'part' and flings it in a towering passion at the composer's feet; nothing but the united efforts of Wagner and "Irene" can restore the angry woman to tranquillity. Such outbursts were by no means uncommon with the gifted artist, and the master would seem to have reckoned them as inevitable concomitants of a nature so impressionable; for he himself retained none but the pleasantest remembrances of these days of rehearsal. It would have fallen out badly for the charming exponent of Irene, however, had *she* deemed fit to follow the example of the inimitable woman,—inimitable even in her whims and tantrums.

It was quite a new element for Wagner, to be occupied with the final preparations for the production of a grand work of his own under conditions so entirely adequate as those presented by the Dresden Court-theatre in all the glory of its reconstruction. How could he feel himself the same individual who had been struggling until now against the greatest odds for one small grain of recognition? For the moment all his ideal plans were swallowed in the practical; yet his pen could not consent to stay completely idle. It will be remembered that he had sent Scribe the draft for an operatic text founded on König's novel, *Die hohe Braut*, before setting out for Paris in person. Nothing having come of it, it might serve him for a little compliment to Reissiger, the Dresden Kapellmeister, who had confided to his ear his private grievances in the matter of librettos. As Reissiger seemed anxious to retrieve his latest failure (with *Adèle de Foix*), and was already casting about for a likely subject, Wagner lost no time in turning his earlier draft into fluent verse. The diction etc. is more in the vein of the *Dutchman* than of its legitimate successor, *Tannhäuser*;

it is purely and simply "opera-verse," though good of its kind and characteristic. As to the general treatment, on the other hand, anyone who had read König's novel, admirable enough in its way, might well be astonished at the ease with which Wagner had converted a diffuse and semi-political subject into so concise and dramatic a text-book. Reissiger did very foolishly in not accepting it, perhaps from a false feeling of pride; but Wagner laid the book on one side without a moment's chagrin, reserving it for some more grateful applicant, and Johann Kittl later on became that lucky man.

There had been no pause in the *Rienzi* rehearsals, bandsmen and singers outbidding each other in their diligence. As to the choruses, for more than half a year Fischer had practised the combined theatre and garrison choirs in their gigantic labour, and given them such a certainty and finish, such mastery of the finest shades, that this factor alone was enough to guarantee success. The preparations for the scenery, the historical costumes after Ferdinand Heine's tasteful drawings, and the imposing arrangments of Ballet-master Lepitre (especially as regards the pantomime in the second act), were all so far advanced by the beginning of October, that a production about the middle of the month could be looked forward to without apprehension. The stage-rehearsals seem to have proceeded merrily enough: at one passage in the third act, on the Campo Vacchino, Adriano has to sit down "brooding" on a broken column; in the middle of what ought to be a highly tragic situation the Devrient suddenly called out to Wagner, "Very well; but what am I to hatch?"—sending the whole band into roars of laughter. Between the second and the third act there was a pause for lunch: a quarter of a century afterwards (amid the preliminaries for *Die Meistersinger* at Munich) the master writes to F. Heine, begging him to "thank Mamma Heine for the delicate herrings and potatoes in the Campo vacchino" which she had sent him in this luncheon pause; a welcome refreshment after three hours of hard work. The trifling incident is worth recording as an instance of Wagner's memory for little acts of kindness.

At last the day of first public performance came round, the 20th of October 1842. The whole town was on tiptoe, as if some rare event were under way; so much had been heard about the work from singers and bandsmen, that there was even a

danger of its effect being already discounted. Nevertheless the result was a triumphant proof that the young composer had surpassed the very highest expectations. At 6 o'clock the opera began, under Reissiger's baton; Wagner seeking refuge in the obscurest corner of the auditorium. From the first long-held note of the trumpets in the overture, down to the closing scene, the attention of a densely-crowded house was riveted. Tichatschek was magnificent, in splendid voice, heroic in action, his by-play much assisted by a fine pair of flashing eyes; not a note failed him, down to the last, though the Tribune's part was much more strongly instrumented then, than after its eventual revision by the composer. The Schröder-Devrient was full of inspiration, particularly in the monologue (or aria) of Adriano in the third act, and in the great duet of the fifth act. Henriette Wüst, with her pure soprano, did not fall behind in musical expression; indeed there were some who gave the palm to her as singer, to the Devrient as actress. The efforts of chorus-master Fischer were crowned with the most brilliant success. After the first, second and third acts the author and the singers of the principal rôles were tumultuously called before the curtain. But it was nearly 10 at night before the third act, with its battle-hymns and victory over the conspiring Nobili, had reached its close, and Wagner began to fear the scandal of his opera being left unfinished because "too long"; for there were two more acts to follow, whereas the playbills had announced the hour of 10 as carriage-time.

The fourth act strikes a very different key to those preceding it. In place of a Te Deum, "Væ, væ tibi maledicto!" sounds from the church of the Lateran; Rienzi is abandoned by the populace; as the curtain falls he remains alone with his sister Irene, while the ban of excommunication sounds once more, in awe-inspiring pianissimo. The end of this act was received in silence: the highest tribute to its tragical effect, but scarcely a tonic to author and performers. One further act had yet to be got through—the fifth. It commenced at 11.30! But Tichatschek, on whom so much depended, was true as steel and fresh as dawn; the scene between Irene and Adriano made a great impression; and interest was maintained crescendo till the final catastrophe. Past midnight the curtain fell for the last time. Over six hours: no work at any European theatre had ever played so long. What

would be the upshot?—The audience rose as a man, and relieved its feelings by a perfect storm of calls for author and performers. On that thrice-memorable night the Dresden public, little wont to pass first verdict on a major work of art, raised Richard Wagner to the proud position of its adopted hero. It was an event unparalleled in the annals of its stage; the first performance of *Rienzi* an unquestioned victory. But amid the universal jubilation the silent testimony of old Wilhelm Fischer appealed the most to the young man: throughout the evening "our Fischer had grown more and more at ease; as though in the fond consciousness that it was *he* who first had recognised me, and given the impetus to my success, he fixed his dear bright eyes on me in tender silence, as who should say: Yes! I knew it would turn out so" (*P. W.* III. 149).

At 8 next morning Wagner rushed off to the bureau in the Sporergasse, to begin cutting and cutting. "I couldn't believe the Intendanz would give it again if I didn't," as he puts it some thirty years later. "After two o'clock I came again, to see if my cuts had been marked; otherwise I felt I could not look a singer or a bandsman in the face again. Then they told me, 'Herr Wagner, we can't have this cut out, nor that.' I asked, 'Why not?'—'Oh! but Herr Tichatschek has been here, and said we mustn't cut it.' I laughed in my sleeve, 'Has Tichatschek gone over to thine enemies?' So I asked him about it that evening. Tears came into his eyes as he replied, 'I won't have any of my part cut out. It was heavenly.'" * The same day he sends a short report to his intimates in Paris, the "Holy Council of Five," † namely Cäcilie and her husband Avenarius, Kietz, Anders and Lehrs. In all the fatigue and excitement of the day following such a night, he cannot forget the faithful few who had shewn their belief in his genius when he was an unknown alien in a foreign land: "Na! dearest children. In all haste and prostra-

* Taken down short-hand by Dr Bierey at a banquet given to Wagner on Jan. 15, 1873, at the Belvedere in Dresden. The composer's account is fully borne out by the contemporary reporter in the *Neue Zeitschrift* (1842, II. No. 36): "I say it with fullest conviction: it were a shame to omit a single bar. I hear that the young composer contemplates many curtailments for the next performance; but it is significant, and flattering to Wagner, that the singers themselves are against any such shortening."

† Compare with his *Letters to Heckel* and the "Five Righteous" (1871 onwards).

tion I at least must send a line to tell you how it fell out yesterday." He recounts the enthusiasm of his work's reception, and how it had caused quite a revolution in the town: "The day after to-morrow comes the second performance; every seat is already booked for the third. The rendering was entrancingly beautiful —Tichatschek, the Devrient—all—all in such perfection as never before. Triumph! Triumph! you good, true, loving hearts! Day has broken! On you all shall it shine!"

The opera was repeated three times during the fortnight ending November 5, and always to a crowded house at increased prices; the trains from Leipzig to Dresden were full of pilgrims to *Rienzi*. With each performance the applause grew louder, and at each the author was 'called' repeatedly with the performers. The first had been witnessed by his Brockhaus sisters, Louise and Ottilie, the latter with her husband Hermann. At the second he had the inexpressible joy of welcoming his mother, now 64 years old, to whom he had paid a brief visit at Leipzig shortly after his return to Germany. Sister Clara Wolfram also came, as he writes to Cäcilie on November 6: "She stayed twelve days with us, and made herself and Minna and me very happy. An excellent dear creature, full of feeling, and without one spark of affectation." It is refreshing to catch a glimpse of that family life which Wagner loved so dearly, in the midst of all these public ovations. But gossip had already commenced to wag its tongue about his personal movements. From the third performance onwards Wagner had arranged with the stage-manager to cease responding in person to 'calls' (most frequent after the second, third and fourth acts), so as to leave his singers in undisputed enjoyment of that honour; a rumour consequently spread like wildfire through the town, that he had posted back to Paris. Then, as he was a complete stranger to almost everybody in the place, people began to tell each other that his work could not possibly be that of a 'prentice hand; whatever could the name be, under which he had already composed grand operas and got them represented? The fact of his being a fairly young-looking man only made the puzzle greater. At last they fancied they had hit the right nail on the head: he was a Leipziger, and had passed some time in Paris—so much was certain—then of course he must be a pupil of *Meyerbeer's*. So it got about (sadly wide of the mark) that his rich brother-in-law F. Brockhaus had sent him to Paris for three years, to "study"

and to write *Rienzi*, making him an allowance of 100 thalers a month, and finally had got his opera produced in Dresden. Oh! the whole thing was clear as noonday, settled to the complete satisfaction of all the wiseacres. But how about his honorarium? Another field for the wildest guesses. Some said he was to pocket all the takings of the first three nights, others that he had compounded for a mere two-hundred thalers.

To come to facts, this latter was a point as to which the poor young man could scarcely be indifferent: down to the present he had reaped nothing from his work but its laurels. Not long ago he told us of the 30,000 fr. paid to Halévy for his *Reine de Chypre*: his own *Rienzi* had so far left him almost starving. After the third performance he received a letter from the General-Direction at last, magnanimously stating that, albeit the ordinary fee for an opera was simply 20 louis d'or, it felt bound to make an exception in *his* case, and accord him an honorarium of three-hundred thalers (£45) for his "beautiful and so admirable work." At all events it was a beginning; and the beginning promised a continuation, for the same Dresden authorities very soon conceived the laudable resolve of bringing out the *Flying Dutchman* too. Wagner naturally jumped at the offer, and immediately commenced negotiations with the Berlin people for return of his score, which had been lying idle in their hands for the best part of a year, and now had passed to those of that same Herr von Küstner who at Munich had declared the book unsuitable for Germany. Other times, other manners: Küstner had lately become Intendant at Berlin, and the news of *Rienzi's* success made him think twice before parting with an untried work of a composer who had suddenly acquired such kudos.

While these negotiations were dragging on, there seemed a decent tho' fallacious prospect of *Rienzi's* being taken up ere long by other German theatres. On November 26 certain fragments from the opera were performed at Leipzig, at a declamatory soirée in the Gewandhaus given by Sophie Schröder, the aged mother of the Dresden artist. "Great Sophie Schröder," Wagner calls her in 1872, and speaks of her "supernatural genius" and "that transfiguring musical tone of voice which melted even the didactics of Schiller's poetry into unadulterated *feeling*." The most celebrated German tragedian of her day, despite her age she held her audience spell-bound by her recitation of Klopstock's

Frühlingsfeier, Bürger's *Lenore* and Schiller's *Glocke*. Her daughter sang Adriano's aria, and Tichatschek the Prayer from the fifth act of *Rienzi*. But, whether due to a false modesty that restrained it from making too much fuss about the music of a native, or to parochial jealousy of success obtained in a neighbouring city where Mendelssohn was not the fetish, Leipzig was by no means effusive in its demonstrations. Public criticism, in fact, was far from laudatory. The *Neue Zeitschrift* noted "no particular effect," kindly setting it down to (its own?) ignorance of the context. The reporter of the *Elegante* recognised "noble struggling for heroic earnestness," but made a most unfortunate slip in calling "the three pieces somewhat dry and barren," the poor critic in his ignorance including with the two *Rienzi* fragments a duet from Marschner's *Templer und Jüdin*! Finally, as a butterfly contribution to the history of this episode, we have a letter of Mendelssohn's dated Nov. 28, in which he talks of Schröder-Devrient being "wilder and madder than ever," adding: "Eight days passed by her in any town are no small joke to her acquaintances. And Tichatschek, Wagner, Döhler, Mühlenfels—the whole past week was one continual racket."

During this trip to Leipzig Wagner revived acquaintance not only with Mendelssohn and Schumann, but also with Laube, who was about to resume the editorship of the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, of late in the hands of Gustav Kühne. His interest in Wagner was as yet unabated, the radical difference in their views of art not having yet come to the surface; so far, he knew nothing of the poet-composer of later date than the work that had just made him famous at Dresden. On November 11 he had written of his own accord to Regisseur Moritz at Stuttgart: "Don't you think Wagner's *Rienzi* would be just the thing for you?" He was looking round for interesting matter to open the new year of his journal, something sparkling to celebrate his return to the editor's chair; he had already secured H. Heine's *Atta Troll*, and now asked Wagner to furnish him material for a little history of his life as man and artist. So, notwithstanding the commencement of rehearsals for the *Dutchman* immediately after his return to Dresden (Nov. 29), Wagner set to work and wrote that *Autobiographic Sketch* so often referred to in the previous pages. It was merely intended as a summary for Laube to elaborate; but the latter was so charmed with its straight-

forwardness and easy style, that he declined to "spoil the life-sketch" by altering a single syllable. All he did, was to write a short prefatory note, explaining how for ten years he had known "this young musician who in two months has become so famous," and had "always hoped that most excellent modern music would issue from a personality so filled with the culture of our day." Laube's account of their meeting in Paris has already been given; we have only to add that the *Sketch* appeared in Nos. 5 and 6 of his journal, Feb. 1 and 8, 1843, accompanied by a lithograph from Kietz's drawing,—which remained the solitary portrait of Richard Wagner for close upon ten years.

In spite of the extraordinary enthusiasm with which *Rienzi* had been received, there were only five repetitions down to the end of 1842, making six performances in all. This was mainly due to the recent death of two of his colleagues having thrown so much work on to Reissiger's shoulders that he really felt too fatigued to give the opera oftener, albeit it had been cut down by an hour and a half, and now played no longer than from 6 to ½ past 10. The autumn of 1842 had carried off two conductors of the Court-band: Weber's former rival, Kapellmeister Francesco Morlachi had died at Innsbruck, Oct. 28, on a journey to Italy for the benefit of his health; barely a fortnight later (Nov. 14) he had been followed to the other side of the grave by his subordinate, the long-proved Musikdirektor, Joseph Ritter Rastrelli. Consequently, when from the sixth performance onwards (Dec. 12) Richard Wagner took over the control of his own opera—by consent of Reissiger and the general management—breathing fresh life and vigour into band and singers, his appearance at the conductor's desk was generally interpreted as the harbinger of an official appointment.

Meanwhile the *Holländer* rehearsals were proceeding apace. Wagner was not particularly exacting about the means for producing this work; to him it seemed so much simpler, its scenic arrangements so much easier than those of *Rienzi*. The title-rôle he had "almost forced," to use his own words, on a singer (Michael Wächter) who had sufficient self-knowledge to feel himself unequal to the task,—though he had proved a very good Orsini, and shortly afterwards won the special praise of Berlioz for his fine baritone-singing in this very rôle of Vanderdecken (a difference in point of view). Daland was given to the exponent

of Cecco in *Rienzi*, Karl Risse; Erik to Reinhold, the Baroncelli of the earlier opera; the small part of Mary to Frau Wächter, wife of the "Holländer." But what Wagner staked his hopes on, was the Senta of Frau Schröder-Devrient; and in the event it was almost entirely due to her dramatic genius that a very lame performance was saved from failure and turned into a seeming triumph. As to the others and their doings, Wagner writes to his old friend Fischer ten years later: "When I think of the unspeakably fatuous presentation of the Flying Dutchman the imaginative Dresden machinist Hänel set upon his splendid stage, I still am seized with a fit of rage. Herrn Wächter's and Risse's brilliant efforts, too, are faithfully remembered by me."

The first performance of the *Flying Dutchman* fell on Monday the 2nd of January 1843. It would have been impossible to deduce from the manner of its reception that, with solitary exception of the "Senta" of Frau Devrient, the thing was a fiasco. According to outward appearances another victory had been scored, though the composer could not be certain whether the audience had gone behind the many flaws in representation—from which even *Rienzi* had not been altogether free—or was under a misunderstanding as to the nature of the work. The overture was received with applause. The first act seemed to have duly woken interest in what was to follow. The second act, mainly through the exertions of Schröder-Devrient, had an indescribable effect: as the *Neue Zeitschrift* for January 3 bears witness, "In this rôle the Devrient surpassed herself in originality; the effect was extraordinary, the audience turned first hot, then cold, for intensity of emotion." At the close of that act a tempest of cheers stormed through the house; composer and singers were compelled to obey the public's call, and appear on the stage. The third act, with its eerie choruses on the phantom ship, and the rapid development of the dramatic catastrophe, had no less demonstrative a reception. In less than a week two repetitions were given, the *third* performance falling on Sunday the 8th; the work's success appeared established, as the public had now had time to make closer acquaintance with details naturally overlooked in the first general impression.

On the day after the third performance Wagner writes to a friend in Berlin, Hofrath Joh. Ph. S. Schmidt, who had sent him a laudatory notice from Spener's journal and expressed the wish

to hear his own account of the affair. That account is in perfect harmony with contemporary printed reports: "I had prepared myself for the public's not making friends with my work until after several representations. The more pleasantly surprised was I, to be assured by the brilliant success of the very first performance that I had won its ear straight off. I declare that I am prouder of this success than of that with Rienzi, as in the latter opera I had called a far larger number of outward means into play, and the whole work was more conformable to our present notions of Grand Opera." Before long he had reason to change his estimate of the public's attitude; but it needed the perspective of riper artistic experiences, to enable him to judge it correctly. At the time he wrote the above he could never have dreamt that, with no assignable cause, the opera would vanish so soon from the repertory of a theatre at which he himself was Kapellmeister, that the *fourth* performance would be the last for *two-and-twenty years*.*—Ten years later than the period at which we have arrived in his history, he writes to Fischer, "That in all the six years of my Royal Kapellmeistership I was unable to revive *this* opera (with Mitterwurzer etc.) and bring it to honour, will be understood by nobody who doesn't know the sort of thing a Dresden Court-theatre is."

It is highly probable that the initial success of the *Dutchman* was largely due to the popularity the young author had gained for himself by the splendour and brilliance of his *Rienzi*; but, with a public so completely unprepared, that very fact would militate against continued favour. The contrast between the two works was too abrupt; the public's expectations had been addressed to something like *Rienzi*, and here they found its opposite. Undoubtedly this was the experience of several of his personal friends, though their cooling-off was compensated in the long run by the accession of many a warm adherent, to whom the *Holländer* had been the first of his works to appeal. To the former class belongs his old comrade H. Laube: he had been delighted with *Rienzi*, but from the date of the *Dutchman's* appearance his relations with Wagner became more and more distant. The composer had invited him to one of the first performances: "I came, I saw, I heard," says Laube later, "but

* 1865. Thereafter the *Dutchman* held its own at Dresden, as at other German theatres.

could not join the circle of enthusiasts that was already beginning to form, for I found everything in the opera spectrally pale. That did not count for much, as I am no musician; but Wagner took arms against my opposition of his system, which he expounded with much emphasis, though not to my conviction. Our dispute was not about musical questions, but on general æsthetic points, by means of which I attacked his fundamental principle: I stubbornly protested that he wished to raise only what he himself could to a universal law. Until late at night we paced up and down the Zwingerstrasse, arguing—he was a most expert and resourceful disputant." Poor Wagner! one involuntarily exclaims; to be rewarded for his friendly invitation by twopenny arguments *ad hominem!* If any further proof were needed, that Laube was quite a second-rate person, it would be supplied by the cry, re-echoed since by every mediocrity, "Wagner would raise the particular to the general." As if that had not been the method of every great artist and discoverer since the days of Tubal Cain.

From Laube's remarks we may incidentally gather that the first little band of true "Wagnerians" was springing into being, moved by the new ideal of Opera that had begun to materialise in the *Dutchman*. But the Dresden Press was unconverted, and its influence seems to have been determinant upon the fate of the new work, not only with the easily-scared Intendanz, but also with the nose-led public. Local critics complained of a dearth of pleasing, catchy melodies, and inveighed against the weight of orchestration—a charge now cropping up against *Rienzi* also; the music, they said, would certainly invite the attentive hearer to repeated audience, but was too uniformly sombre, more learned than alluring, etc., etc. The artist himself kept silence, and left his youngest work unchampioned; his friends were crestfallen, and all the more anxious to efface the impression of the *Dutchman*, alike on themselves and on the public, by a whole-hearted resumption of *Rienzi*. Accordingly, to give the latter work without abridgement, in 1843 it was repeatedly distributed over *two* successive evenings: on the first night the first two acts were played, under the title of *Rienzi's Grösse*; on the second the three remaining acts, as *Rienzi's Fall*. Thus singers and hearers kept fresh from beginning to end of the opera; and the somewhat hazardous experiment, of asking the public to pay twice over for what it had received (with cuts) in once, was thoroughly success-

ful: on each of the pair of nights the house was always full. As for the author, he had passed through privations enough in Paris, and may be excused if he preferred to rest on his *Rienzi* oars in waiting for the opportunity of forging ahead; the rapidity of his own development was recent of date, and he could scarcely expect the public to be prepared to respond to it at once.

Meantime, in the same early days of January 1843 that brought the first three performances of the *Holländer*, negotiations for Richard Wagner's appointment as Kapellmeister had been making headway. Normally the Dresden Court-orchestra was presided over by *two* Kapellmeisters, supreme and equal in command, with a subordinate Musikdirektor to assist them: of these three officers, as already mentioned, two had lately died (Morlachi and Rastrelli), leaving to Reissiger the full burden and heat of the day. Now Wagner had won the confidence of bandsmen and singers alike at the rehearsals of his own two works, and also had relieved Reissiger of late in their conducting; so that all eyes were turned to him as the presumable successor of Morlachi. Certainly there were a number of other candidates from all parts; but von Lüttichau had sense enough at least to see the advantage of attaching Wagner to his establishment; besides the composer of *Rienzi* he had serious thoughts of nobody but Gläser, composer of the fairly popular *Adler's Horst*, at that time engaged in Copenhagen. For all his anxiety to secure Wagner's services, however, the Intendant had a little scheme of his own; he wished to slip him into the subordinate post of Musikdirektor, and thus keep the second Kapellmeistership open for some other big fish. Wagner, on his side, was none too anxious for the appointment, whether higher or lower: as he says in this regard in the *Communication*, "My earliest experiences, then those of Paris, and lastly even those already reaped at Dresden, had left me no longer in the dark as to the actual character of our public art-conditions, especially insofar as they proceed from our artistic institutions. My repugnance to any further concernment with them, than what was absolutely needful for the performance of my operas, had already acquired no little strength." To this effect he expressed himself to his more intimate friends. Most of them, accustomed to regard a court-appointment as the acme of ambition, very naturally could not understand him; but Laube, of a more democratic turn of mind, appears to have sympathised with Wagner's scruples, for in

the *Elegante* of Jan. 4, 1843, we read these words (evidently written before the *Dutchman* came upon the scene), "It surely would be undesirable, to see productive faculty of this kind wasted on the drudgery of practice and rehearsals." However, the remembrance of his former straits, coupled with the assumption that at all events he would be able to do some good for art with the excellent artistic means at his disposal, soon conquered his avowed disinclination.

At noon on January 5, the day after an outwardly successful second performance of the *Dutchman*, he had his first official interview with von Lüttichau, who managed to overcome most of his objections. One point, however, seems to have been left a little vague, concerning the old Dresden tradition, to which even Weber had had to conform, that the Kapellmeister should serve one year 'on trial' prior to a definite contract. Whether Wagner agreed to this condition by word of mouth, is not quite clear; but on the self-same day he writes a letter to von Lüttichau, setting forth at length the reasons that prevent his consenting to such a *trial* year on any account, "even if, as highly possible, it should destroy all present prospect of one of the most honourable of posts." "If Your Excellency will allow me to express my candid opinion without reserve," this letter adds, "I consider it my duty to declare that I have found the artistic discipline of the Royal Kapelle in a thoroughly unsatisfactory state just now; whilst in the last few years, through acquaintance with the achievements of the better Paris orchestras, I have acquired so high a notion of what can be done by forces so admirable as those to be found in the Royal Kapelle, that it would be against my whole nature—upon entering on my functions under whatsoever title—not to give effect to the views and experience thus acquired. To do this in the present condition of the Royal Kapelle, I should need, not merely to expound my views, but to adopt measures striking to the very root of its organisation, and to insist on their being carried out. To be successful as regards this latter most important point, I require Authority, in the fullest sense of the word; I need an unconditional expression of the confidence reposed in me by higher quarters. Now, were I at first to enter a position toward the Royal Kapelle that gave it more or less the liberty and right to declare its more or less biased opinion of me, I should simply be lamed and tethered in advance; in the very year of laying my foundations I should lose once and for all that proper attitude

without which no one, under present circumstances, could be of use to the institute over which Your Excellency presides." Lest such a demand should appear overweening, or be open to misinterpretation, he qualifies it at the letter's end by "It would be impossible for me to insist on a further fulfilment of the contract, should I myself become aware, or should Your Excellency find yourself forced to the conclusion, that I am not in a position to justify so great a confidence."*

In every way an extraordinary document. Here we have a young artist, without a penny in the world, dictating unprecedented terms to the chief of the institution which may reasonably be expected to make him world-famed; more than that, already criticising its organisation, and proclaiming his intention of promptly introducing reforms. Only a *Wagner* could thus dare fortune. If he lost the Dresden appointment, there was no immediate prospect for him; whilst behind him lay a load of debts and a shoal of eager creditors. Hardly had the news of his success with *Rienzi* crossed the frontiers of Saxony, than from Magdeburg, Königsberg and Riga, rose a chorus of voices clamorous for payment, for all the world as if he had suddenly inherited the riches of Golconda. As early as November he had written sister Cäcilie, "My old Magdeburg creditors are threatening me with prosecution, and I shall have to appease them as best I can"; whilst, among other autographs of this period that have since been rained upon a curious public, there is the complete draft of a letter touching the gradual repayment of a loan of a couple of hundred thalers with accruing interest. But perhaps the most illuminating is a letter written to contrabassist Morath of the Magdeburg theatre on the day of the second performance of the *Dutchman*, i.e. on the eve of that ultimatum to von Lüttichau. Wagner owed Morath money for copying out music—in all probability the parts for that unfortunate performance of *Das Liebesverbot*—and now devotes a portion of the meagre honorarium for the *Dutchman* to settling this old score: "Dresden, 4th January 1843. My dear Herr Morath, I have kept you waiting long, and must confess that it has always pained me to the bottom of my heart whenever I

* This sentence, merely meant to apply to the *first* year of office, was employed by Lüttichau a few years later in a manner to which we shall have to refer in the next volume.

thought of you and my total inability to pay you. My present better prospects have only been compassed by the greatest sacrifices in the world; I have had to bear want and privations of all kinds, not to come to utter grief. Even now, for what concerns my outward circumstances, I am by no means at the goal; my takings are as yet so small, as scarcely to enter into consideration. However, God will help me on, and I will make a beginning with you; for you served me uprightly, and have always behaved to me with the greatest kindness. Moreover, not one of all my creditors is more in need of the money than yourself. So please accept from me the 35 thalers you asked for in your last letter. If ever I can serve you, it will be with the best of will. My heartiest thanks for your indulgence, and the assurance of my utmost esteem. Yours most sincerely, Richard Wagner."—While affording an outline of his situation, this letter forms a striking pendant to that addressed to Lüttichau next day, and thus completes the picture of the master's character. Inflexible in his artistic demands, and fearless in his declaration of them when treating with "high quarters," he is ever grateful, thoughtful, appreciative, to those in a humbler position.

For the first time in the annals of the Royal Court-theatre at Dresden the nominee's trial *year* was waived, but another formality had to be observed—that of a trial *representation*. To this he could have no serious objection, and he therefore chose Weber's *Euryanthe*: a doubly significant choice. Where Weber left off, in every sense, he wished to make a beginning; and was he not about to occupy the very seat of the beloved model of his youth? The trial-performance took place on Tuesday the 10th of January, two days after the third representation of the *Holländer*. It was not to lead to a definite appointment, nor had the negotiations with von Lüttichau any binding force as yet; for the King himself had first to give the royal consent to his Intendant's proposals, and even the objections of the *Bishop*—who had a voice in the matter on account of the church duties of the Kapellmeister—had to be removed by a promise that the two Protestant conductors, Reissiger and Wagner, should have a Catholic "Musikdirektor" as their assistant.

Immediately after this wellnigh superfluous proof of the ability of a man who had already rehearsed and conducted his own

operas at the theatre, Wagner appears to have gone to Berlin, where he had announced his visit in a letter of January 9. It was a matter of using his persuasive powers to induce the new Intendant there, Herr von Küstner, to do his utmost to produce the *Flying Dutchman* as soon as possible. But, for all great Meyerbeer's original recommendation, and the formal acceptance of over a year ago, the Berlin management had no serious mind to give the opera just yet; so that Wagner's flying visit was productive of nothing beyond a deeper insight into the hopeless state of art in the Prussian capital. To Schumann he writes soon afterwards: "The world there lieth in wickedness, and I have come to the conclusion that nothing elevating for art will *ever* bloom there. The demoralisation comes from above; everything is half and half. It disgusted me." This reminds one of his final verdict on Paris, delivered into the same ears a twelvemonth before. In each case, however much the superficial may prate of his arguing from the particular to the general, Wagner was a true prophet for at least the term of his own life.

During Wagner's absence his old companion Schindelmeisser, half-brother to Heinrich Dorn, had also conducted a trial-performance at Dresden, of Spontini's *Vestalin*. It is not quite clear whether Schindelmeisser was a rival candidate for the Kapellmeistership, or merely an aspirant to the subordinate post of Musikdirektor. In either case he was unsuccessful, on the one hand; on the other, he remained the best of friends with Wagner, whose appointment was now at last decided. In consideration of our hero's many services already rendered to the theatre, Lüttichau had recommended him for immediate entry on his new duties and emoluments as from February 1, although the salary of the late occupant of the post was to be paid to his widow (Mme Morlachi), as an act of grace, down to the end of May. How he regarded the appointment at the time, may be gathered from the letter to Schumann just-quoted—enclosed with the score of the *Holländer* on loan for a few days' perusal. "Much," says this letter of Jan. 27, 1843, "much as I held aloof at first from all competition for the Musikdirektor's post left vacant by Rastrelli's death, I could not maintain a stand against the unusual offers finally made me. I become Kapellmeister on full pay, just like Morlachi, and enjoy the additional favour of becoming it at once; whereas every Kapellmeister before me,

even Weber himself, had had to serve a probationary year as Musikdirektor at a lower salary."

The position had practically been forced on him, against his sound artistic instinct. Fate seems to have said, "You need schooling; Paris was not enough, for there you only saw the Opera from outside; you now shall learn by sore experience what it is to work, even with the best and best-disposed of artists, for such a broil. Your creative genius will have to struggle to find a breathing-space amid the throng of routine duties; your organising talent shall be driven to despair at the sullen opposition it will meet. But through it you must go; and, if you only keep true to yourself, you'll issue from the fire a marvel for all the ages." But Fate, being a lady, was not so tactless as to say this quite so audibly at once; she coaxed him into thinking that the prospect, after all, was not so gloomy as he feared: "It had been brought plainly enough before my own eyes that it was not Art such as I had learnt to know it, but a wholly different set of interests, merely cloaking themselves with an artistic semblance, that was ministered to in the daily traffic of our public art-affairs"—he tells us in the *Communication*; "but I had not as yet thrust down to the fundamental cause of this phenomenon, and therefore rather held it an accident, remediable by a little pains. . . . My recognition of the high opinion generally entertained of such a post, and finally the signal honour which my selection appeared to represent in the eyes of my friends, ended by dazzling me also, making me behold an unwonted stroke of fortune in what was but too soon to be the source of gnawing pain. I became—in high glee!—a Königlicher Kapellmeister."

APPENDICES.

I. GENEALOGICAL TABLE.—II. FAMILY CHRONICLE.
III. SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES.

I. GENEALOGICAL TABLE.

(N.B. Collaterals are relegated to the "Family chronicle.")

SAMUEL WAGNER (1643-1705),
Schoolmaster at Thammenhain; first wife Barbara, who died 1701.

|

EMANUEL WAGNER (1664-1726),
Schoolmaster at Colmen, later at Kühren, married in 1688
Anna Benewitz of Kühren (1670-1718).

|

SAMUEL WAGNER (1703-1750),
Organist, cantor and schoolmaster at Müglenz, married
1728 Anna Sophia Rössig of Dahlen.

|

GOTTLOB FRIEDRICH WAGNER (1736-1795),
Student of theology, then excise-officer at Leipzig; married 1769
Johanna Sophia Eichel of Leipzig, who died 1814.

|

KARL FRIEDRICH WILHELM WAGNER (1770-1813),
Police-actuary at Leipzig, married Johanna Rosina Bertz
(or Berthis) of Weissenfels (1779-1848).

|

WILHELM RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883),
Married 1836 Christine Wilhelmine Planer (1814-1866), secondly
Cosima von Bülow, née Liszt (born 1837).

|

HELFERICH SIEGFRIED RICHARD WAGNER,
Born June 6, 1869.

II. FAMILY CHRONICLE, 1643-1813.

1643. **Samuel Wagner (I.)**, the earliest ascertainable progenitor of Richard Wagner; judging by his Christian name, son of a Protestant village schoolmaster.

1648. Westphalian Treaty of Peace, celebrated by Paul Gerhard in his "Dancklied."

1656-80. *Johann Georg II. Elector of Saxony; a pleasure-lover who expended sums the wasted land could ill afford, on unlimited banquets, jousts by torchlight, lion-baiting, Italian Opera, illuminations, masquerades and processions.*

1661. *New police-, marriage-, household-, craft-, and sumptuary regulations for Saxony. Among others, one decreeing that Divine Service shall be "pursued with inner devotion," and "no converse be held with the Devil through crystal-gazing," no bullets be charmed, etc., etc.*

1663. SAMUEL WAGNER becomes schoolmaster at Thammenhain, and marries his first wife Barbara (surname undiscoverable).

1664. **Emanuel Wagner** born in August; eldest son of Samuel.

1671. Elisabeth Wagner, Samuel's eldest daughter, born in Sept.

1676. SAMUEL WAGNER (II.), second son of Samuel I., born Oct. 29.

1679. Johanna Christiana Wagner, Samuel's second daughter, born Dec. 27 (died Oct. 26, 1683).

1680. *Plague in Saxony: warning-posts erected outside infected districts Nov. 23, among them Kühren and Hohburg.*

1684. EMANUEL WAGNER becomes schoolmaster at Colmen (Kulm) near Thalwitz.

1685. *Joh. Sebastian Bach born at Eisenach, March 21.*

1686. Elisabeth Wagner, Samuel's eldest daughter, buried Sept. 27 "with a funeral sermon and valediction; fifteen years and a few weeks of age."

1688. SAMUEL WAGNER celebrates his Silver Wedding at Thammenhain.

Oct. 16, **Emanuel Wagner**, 24 years old, schoolmaster at Colmen, marries Anna, daughter of the Kühren schoolmaster and taxgatherer Ernst Benewitz, the bans having thrice been published at Kühren, Colmen and Thammenhain.

1690. Joh. Heinrich Wagner, third (?) son of Samuel I. and brother of Emanuel, born Feb. 21; one of his godparents is Ernst Benewitz, now filling at Thammenhain a similar office to that he held at Kühren. Joh. Heinrich dies Jan. 18, 1691.

1691-94. *Johann Georg IV. Elector of Saxony. With him begins the 'mistress' régime (Sibylla, Gräfin von Rochlitz), which already has disastrous effects on the public finances.*

1693. SAMUEL WAGNER II., brother of Emanuel, and afterwards successor to his father's post, is mentioned in a Thammenhain document as "school-assistant."

1697-1763. *Polish-Saxon period: Elector Friedrich August I. turns Catholic, to remove the main objection to his elevation to the throne of Poland.*

1698. *Elector Fried. August I., known as the Strong, makes his ceremonial entry into Warsaw on Jan. 15 as King August II. of Poland. The attainment and maintenance of the Polish crown swallow endless sums of money. Prince Egon of Fürstenberg, a Catholic, is installed in Dresden as Stateholder.*

1699. *Saxon-Danish-Russian alliance against Charles the Twelfth of Sweden.*

1700 (?). ANNA DOROTHEA, eldest (?) daughter of Emanuel Wagner, born at Colmen.

1701. Five-and-fortieth anniversary of the wedding of Samuel I. and Barbara Wagner.

Oct. 10. BARBARA, "wedded wife of Samuel WAGNER, schoolmaster of this place, died in peace, and the following Wednesday [Oct 12] was interred with a funeral sermon and valediction."

Friedrich August, hard-pressed by Charles the Twelfth, abandons Warsaw, and retires with his court to Cracow.

1702. EMANUEL WAGNER, hitherto at Colmen by Thalwitz, becomes schoolmaster at Kühren.

Introduction of the General-Excise in Saxony; by which

means the enormous sums required for the ostentation of the Polish crown, the beautification of Dresden, the maintenance of a costly army etc., are more evenly levied, no longer falling entirely on the poorest classes.

1703. SAMUEL WAGNER I., just 60 years of age, marries in January his second wife, Anna, a young woman with an untraceable surname.

Samuel Wagner III., eldest son of Emanuel Wagner, and afterwards head of the house, is born. At this date there accordingly are three contemporaneous Samuel Wagners—grandfather, uncle and nephew; or father, brother and son.

1704. SAMUEL WAGNER II., brother of Emanuel, marries at the age of twenty-eight; he now is schoolmaster at Gross-Zschepa.

Joh. Sebastian Bach organist at Anstadt.

1705. **Samuel Wagner I.** dies in the third year of his second marriage, after holding office for 43 years, and is buried at Thammenhain, March 25, "with a funeral sermon and valediction (text, John I. 2, 'If any man sinneth' etc.)."

SAMUEL WAGNER II. takes his father's place as schoolmaster and organist at Thammenhain. His eldest son, Hans SAMUEL (IV.) is born in May; so that there once more are *three* Samuel Wagners.

Oct. 4. The Polish crown is bestowed by Charles the Twelfth on Stanislaus Leczinsky; Friedrich August seeks refuge with his ally Tsar Peter.

1706. Hans Samuel (IV.) dies Jan. 14, aged three-quarters of a year; a second son of Samuel Wagner II. is christened after him Hans SAMUEL (V.).

Peace of Altranstädt. Charles the Twelfth invades Saxony, and compels Fried. August to renounce the Polish throne. Saxony has to pay the keep of the Swedish army throughout the winter (400,000 *rix-dollars in gold per month*).

1709. Maria Sophia born to Emanuel Wagner at Kühren, March 19.

July 13, Hans Samuel W. (V.) dies, barely two years old.

Sept. 8. SAMUEL WAGNER II. (brother of Emanuel) dies at the age of 33. Consequently there remains but one bearer

of the Christian name, namely Samuel Wagner III., son of Emanuel and great-grandfather of Richard Wagner.

The Elector regains the Polish crown, laying fresh intolerable burdens on his Saxon fatherland.

1713. Silver Wedding of EMANUEL AND ANNA WAGNER.

1718. ANNA WAGNER dies at Kühren, aged 48.

1722. Anna Dorothea Wagner, daughter of Emanuel, married at Kühren on April 21 to Master-Tailor Joh. Müller of Benndorf near Altenburg.

1723. *Joh. Seb. Bach becomes cantor and organist of S. Thomas' church at Leipzig, May* 30.

1726. **Emanuel Wagner** dies at Kühren, aged 62, after two-and-forty years of office.

1727. **Samuel Wagner III.**, aged 24, undergoes his singing-trial in church at Müglenz, at service on S. John's Day. June 28 and Aug. 14, decrees appointing Samuel III. firstly adjunct, then successor, to the Müglenz cantor and schoolmaster Adam Geissler.

1728. On February the 10th **Samuel III.** marries ANNA SOPHIA, orphan of Master-Miller Christoph Rössig.

Dec. 16, Johanna Sophia, eldest daughter of Samuel Wagner III., born at Müglenz.

1731. Christina Eleonora, second daughter of Samuel Wagner, born August 4 at Müglenz.

1732. Samuel Wagner's younger sister, Maria Sophia (daughter of Emanuel W.), married at Luppa Feb. 10, at the age of 23, to Electoral-Forester Joh. Christian Eberhardt. Brother and sister now have a wedding-day in common.

1733. *Elector Friedrich August I. dies Sept.* 1, *and is buried at Cracow, Saxony merely receiving the heart of its prince in a silver capsule.*

His son, Friedr. August II. (favourite, Graf Brühl) is elected King of Poland under the title of August III.

Nov. 15. Susanna Carolina, third daughter of Samuel Wagner III., born at Müglenz.

1736. **Gottlob Friedrich Wagner**, eldest son and fourth child of Samuel III., born Feb. 18 at Müglenz.

1738. Anna Elisabeth Wagner, fourth daughter (fifth child) of Samuel III., born at Müglenz Dec. 3.

1741. In April the child Anna Elisabeth dies.

1742. Dorothea Elisabeth, fifth daughter (sixth child) of Samuel Wagner, born Feb. 4 at Müglenz.

1744. In April the child Dorothea Elisabeth dies.

1745. SAMUEL AUGUST, second son and seventh child of Samuel Wagner III., born Aug. 13 at Müglenz. He is the sixth and *last* ascertainable bearer of the name in the Wagner family, as altered influences of the age gave preference to German, above Biblical baptismal names.

Frederick the Great's victory at Kesselsdorf condemns Saxony to pay a million rthlr (rix-dollars) in gold, beyond the heavy contributions already levied.

1746. *The all-powerful Graf Heinrich v. Brühl becomes Prime Minister to Friedr. August II., and thus obtains control of the destinies of Saxony. Utmost extravagance of pomp and luxury at court contrasts with want and havoc throughout the country.*

1750. *Johann Sebastian Bach, still cantor of S. Thomas' church, dies July 28 at Leipzig, "oppressed with cares, lonely and forgotten, leaving his family in poverty and deprivation."*

Samuel Wagner III. dies Nov. 22 at Müglenz, not quite 48 years old, leaving a widow, three daughters and two sons, of whom GOTTLOB FRIEDRICH is 14 years of age, Samuel August 5 years.

1756. *Aug 15, Frederick the Great invades Saxony with 67,000 men. The Saxon army is hemmed in at Pirna, Dresden taken, the treasury seized.*

1759. **Gottlob Friedrich Wagner** inscribed a student of Theology at the Leipzig University, March 16.

1760. *A terrible year for Saxony; culminating point of the Seven-Years War. July: Dresden besieged and bombarded, whole quarters of the city falling to the flames. Friedrich August with Count Brühl in Poland.*

November 3 to 4, Frederick the Great takes up winter quarters at Leipzig. Eight tons of gold extorted by maltreatment from the magistrates and well-to-do tradesmen; coinage debased by Frederick's minting Jew.

1762. *Nov. Armistice, Saxony remaining the winter-quarters for Prussians and Austrians.*

1763. *Feb. 15, Peace of Hubertsburg. Saxony has lost over 100 million rthlr. in contributions, plunder and destruction by fire.*

Oct. 5, *Friedr. August II. dies; Prince Xaver becomes regent for his nephew Friedrich August III., aged* 13 *years.*

1764. Intimacy of GOTTLOB FRIEDRICH WAGNER with the Leipzig schoolmaster Gottlob Friedrich Eichel and his daughter Johanna Sophia.

1765. Baptism of the antenuptial son of Gottlob Friedrich in S. Thomas' church, March 23.

Young Goethe inscribed a Law-student at Leipzig, Oct. 19.

The Leipzig theatre, newly erected beside the Rannstadt Gate, opened Oct. 6 *with Schlegel's "Hermann."*

1767. GOTTLOB FRIEDRICH WAGNER becomes assistant excise-officer at the Rannstädter Thor.

1768. *Friedrich August III., the Just, attaining his majority, ascends the Saxon throne.—Goethe leaves Leipzig.*

1769. Fourteenth to sixteenth Sundays after Trinity, banns of marriage between **Gottlob Friedrich Wagner** and JOHANNA SOPHIA EICHEL (see above) proclaimed in S. Thomas' church at Leipzig.

September: the marriage takes place at Schönefeld, near Leipzig.

1770. Karl **Friedrich** Wilhelm **Wagner** (eldest son of Gottlob Friedrich, the love-child having died) born June 18. Among his baptismal witnesses is the maternal grandfather, schoolmaster Eichel.

Dec. 17, *Beethoven born.*

1773. *Goethe's "Götz von Berlichingen."—Gluck goes to Paris for the production of his "Iphigenia in Aulis."—Mozart,* 16 *years of age, writes operas in the Italian manner.*

1774. Birth of Gottlob Heinrich ADOLF, second son of Gottlob Friedrich Wagner.

1778. JOHANNA BERTZ (also spelt Berthis), eventually mother of Richard Wagner, born Sept. 19 at Weissenfels.

Nov. 3, Johanna Christiane FRIEDERIKE born, third and last child of the marriage of Gottlob Friedrich and Johanna Sophia Wagner.

1780. LUDWIG GEYER, eventually stepfather of Richard Wagner, born Jan. 21 at Eisleben, where his father is practising as Actuary to the Overseer.

1782. FRIEDRICH WAGNER, 12 years old, at the S. Thomas school.

Sept. 20 and 22, first two performances of Schiller's "Robbers" at Leipzig, creating an extraordinary sensation.

1785. *April 17, Schiller at Leipzig, to meet the Körner circle. In September he follows Körner to Dresden.*

1791. *"Magic Flute" at Vienna. Mozart dies Dec. 5.*

1792. ADOLF WAGNER attends the Leipzig University, to study Theology; FRIEDRICH WAGNER studies Law.

Sept. France declared a Republic. Goethe accompanies the Allies into France; disastrous retreat.

1794. Silver Wedding of GOTTLOB FRIEDRICH WAGNER, Sept. 15 (?).

1795. **Gottlob Friedrich Wagner** dies March 21. His widow survives him nineteen years, dying Jan. 26, 1814.

1798. **Friedrich Wagner**, eldest son of the above, and vice-actuary at the Town Court of Justice, marries JOHANNA BERTZ of Weissenfels, aged 19, on June the 2nd.

1798-99. *Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition.*

1799. ALBERT, Friedrich Wagner's first son, born March 2.

On his return from Egypt, Napoleon overthrows the Directorate, and gets himself appointed First Consul of France.

Dec. Schiller confirmed in his "hopes of Opera" by Gluck's Iphigenia: "The music is so heavenly that even at rehearsals, in the bear-garden of singers, it moved me to tears."

1801. *Peace of Luneville: the left bank of the Rhine ceded to France.*

July 21, Karl GUSTAV, second son of Friedrich Wagner born (died in infancy).

Sept. 18. Friedrich Wagner and his wife attend the first Leipzig performance of the "Maid of Orleans," given in presence of the poet.

1803. Johanna ROSALIE (Richard Wagner's eldest sister) born March 4.

The performance of "the Bride of Messina" at Lauchstädt rouses indescribable enthusiasm.

1804. *Napoleon proclaimed Emperor of the French, May 20. German journals print portraits of him, in regal state with purple mantle and insignia! Beethoven, enraged, tears the dedication-page from the score of his* Eroica.

August 7, Karl JULIUS, Friedrich Wagner's third son, born.

1805. *Schiller's death, May* 9.
Dec. 14, LOUISE Konstanz, Fr. Wagner's second daughter, born.

1806. *Germany at its lowest ebb. Rhine-league under Napoleon's protection; Franz II. abdicates the German Imperial crown. Battle of Jena. Ruin of Prussia.*
Dec. 11, *Napoleon makes separate peace and alliance with Saxony. Introduction of the* Code Napoléon.
FRIEDRICH WAGNER entrusted with the organisation of Leipzig police-matters.

1807. KLARA Wilhelmine, third daughter of Fried. Wagner, born Nov. 29.

1808. *Dec.* 22, *Beethoven brings out his C minor and Pastoral Symphonies at an "Akademie" in Vienna.*

1809. Maria THERESIA, fourth daughter of Fried. Wagner, born April 1.
Sept. 29, Geyer becomes a member of the Seconda troupe.

1810. *Napoleon, at the zenith of his glory, marries Marie Louise of Austria, April* 2; *five Queens her train-bearers.*

1811. Wilhelmine OTTILIE, fifth and last daughter of Fried. Wagner, born March 14, almost simultaneously with the "King of Rome."
May. Napoleon at Dresden; brilliant fêtes in his honour.

1812. *June* 24, *Napoleon crosses the river Niemen with* 300,000 *men into Russia.*
Sept. 5, *Burning of Moscow. Napoleon abandons his decimated army.*

1813, May 22: RICHARD WAGNER born.
Oct. 16-19, *Battle of Liberation beneath the walls of Leipzig; Napoleon flees the city; Friedrich August, King of Saxony, taken prisoner.*
November 22, **Friedrich Wagner** dies.

III. SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES.

Pages 22-23. ADOLF WAGNER'S "TWO EPOCHS OF MODERN POETRY (pubd. 1806).—The introduction to this work disclaims any idea of following the poetic tendencies of two distinct nations through all their branchings, but proposes to concentrate attention on the origin of those tendencies: "For Poetry is the highest point of a nation's culture, at which assemble all its rays." In this way, Adolf thinks, the national stamp will not escape the single eye of the inquirer, who will recognise in it the unity that lies at bottom of all variety of forms, "the invisible sun from which they each derive their light." For this purpose three representative Italian poets are confronted with three German. The background for the first division of the work is furnished by a bird's-eye-view of the Middle Ages and the divers movements of that time: Chivalry, Scholasticism (which Adolf calls "a kind of Philosophic Chivalry"), and the conflict between Spiritual and Temporal powers. In discussing Dante he begins with the Lyric poet. More manly and intellectual, than with the maudlin Troubadours, had been the cultivation of the noblest promptings of his heart: from the depths of Scholasticism, into which he had been led by his chosen master, Aristotle, his Love had shone back on him in protean form. "It all was traced by him to its first generator, to the sole true Being, as its fountain-head; and thence grew up a world whose grandeur and magnificence the ancient bards had guessed at, and the holy writers of the Church depicted under every kind of image; so that everything was urging to the Ideal, and what was real was but an allegory of the Unending. In this wise Beatrice became to him the lofty figure whom all serve, through whom he saw all as through a medium,—she became to him an allegoric personage, his love towards her but the daughter of a higher, purer love; and thus it passed into a mystic glamour, from which the spirit wholly given to the fount of Love shot glorious sparks that lighted the whole world." In the *Divina Commedia* Dante desired to limn the metamorphosis of the human mind until its perfecting in "Christianism"; regarded thus, the profound purpose of the poem's trichotomy sprang to the eye. For everything, first fleeing from the eternal, next strives to establish its own individuality and assert it in conflict with others, till lastly, taken up once more into the Idea from which it issued, it shines in perfect peace. Here, then, is shewn the *world*, its *reflex* in art and science, and the return of both to their *idea*. The *Inferno*, a series of terrible pictures executed with a boldness that stops at nothing, shews human nature bound to the earthly; in the *Purgatorio*, realm of colours, where the scenery grows more inviting, man develops free action and creative force; in the *Paradiso* all is radiant with purest light. In this sense the great Epic poet raised the particularities of his experience to the universal;

whereas Petrarch, whose whole life was *lyric*, individualised the universal into the particular, made the infinite a halo for the finite. Petrarch still having treated Love from its ideal aspect, it was Boccaccio who bent at last to its realistic side, painting alike the ardour of its pleasures and the torment of its pains; in this relation, besides the *Decameron*, Adolf gives special prominence to *Fiammetta*, in which the whole gamut of passion in a robust female heart is pursued through every semitone. Viewed thus, the spheres of these three poets combine to form a rounded whole: in Dante blends and is united what in Petrarch gravitates to the idealistic side, in Boccaccio to the realistic. Turning to the German poets, the author of the *Two Epochs* regards "the vanishing of *religion*" as the chief obstacle to the flourishing of poetry in our age. However, even here the corresponding types are not to be denied. Like the life of the great Florentine, Adolf Wagner considers the life of Goethe a more than usually organic one; so manifest and sharply drawn are all the segments of the circle he passed through, down to the splendid autumn that presents in *Wilhelm Meister* a "landscape in the evening sun." In contrast to the tranquil grandeur and clarity of Goethe and his works, Adolf sets Schiller's impetuous dash into the wheels of time, his philosophical method, his striving and wrestling after what floats down to Goethe so lovingly and of itself. In Goethe, Schiller and Wieland there returns in modern Germany, as Ideal, what in Italy had shewn itself at Dante's epoch as the Real. Goethe, like Dante, is the point of union for predecessors and successors; in him the spirit of Poetry became more inward, announcing a *new* world, a world of *concentration of forces hitherto dispersed.*

The above gives but a very general idea of the wealth of original thought and observation in Adolf Wagner's remarkable book; on the other hand it merely hints at many a one-sided view, such as that of calling Schiller a "philosophic" poet, in particular his *Don Carlos* a "granary of Kantism." His nephew Richard Wagner went much deeper, especially in the ninth chapter of his *German Art and German Policy* (where *Don Carlos* is appreciated at its genuine worth) and in the essay on *Beethoven.*

The great poets of Italy are also dealt with in Adolf's brief but pregnant introduction (written in Italian) to his *Parnasso italiano*, 1826. Here the *four* chief Italians are characterised as follows: Petrarch is the poet of a somewhat forced and stilted Platonism; Tasso of the emotions; Ariosto of the imagination (with Oriental influences); whilst Dante, uniter of the divine and human, is the poet of the intellect. Adolf Wagner's veneration for Goethe is evinced once more in the *Parnasso*, by a dedication to the "Principe dei poeti,"—which led to his receiving from the German poet a silver goblet (according to the *Konversationslexikon der neuesten Zeit und Litteratur* 1835, Sept., pp. 230 et seq.).

Page 99. ADOLF WAGNER'S MARRIAGE.—Since the death of his friend Apel and the removal of the widow and children of his brother Friedrich Wagner to Dresden, whilst Wendt had been summoned to Göttingen, Adolf had lived in greater and greater seclusion, scarcely leaving Leipzig save for tiny trips, and occupying all his time with literary work. Among his numerous translations of this period we may mention that of a work of William Coxe's, which appeared under the title *Geschichte des Hauses Oesterreich von Rudolf*

von Hapsburg bis Leopold II. (Leipzig, Brockhaus, 4 vols., 1812-17), and received the doubtful honour of being pirated in his lifetime; also the *Neue Reisen der Engländer* (vols. I. and II., Leipzig 1814 et seq.); *Benjamin Franklin's nachgelassene Schriften* (5 vols., Weimar 1817-19); *William Shakespeare's Leben* (Leipzig 1824), a translation of Aug. Scottowe's work; also *Christoph Colombo und seine Entdeckungen* (Leipzig, Fleischer, 1825), from Spotorno's standard treatise, founded on the *Codex diplomaticus Columbi* presented to the Republic of Genoa by Lorenzo Oderigo in 1670,—this last translation has a preface and notes displaying Adolf's indignation at the gross injustices that had embittered the last years of the great explorer. But even more than in his translations, A. Wagner distinguished himself in countless other learned works as one of the most eminent philologists of his day, especially in the department of modern tongues and their literature. Among these we have the twelfth edition of Bailey-Fahrenkrüger's *Wörterbuch der englischen Sprache* (2 vols., Jena, Frommann, 1823) a monument of comparative etymology; in July 1820 he writes, "As my English dictionary holds me fixed, I can scarcely take a trip this year." Further, his anonymously-published *Glossary* to E. Fleischer's edition of Shakespeare, where Nares indeed is drawn upon, but with many corrections and critical and historical notes. Adolf's etymologic comparisons both in these works and in his *Zum europäischen Sprachenbau*, based on Murray, shew thoroughgoingness and great acumen. His *Lehrbuch der italienischen Sprache* (Leipzig 1819) also merits recognition, and received it at the time.

Adolf's diligence and unassuming erudition won him many friends both at home and abroad, but he had little time for correspondence with them. Literary feuds he detested, yet was forced to take arms, upon occasion, in war with ignorance and self-conceit. One of his bugbears was the moral and literary incorporation of the reactionary spirit in the person of August von Kotzebue. He writes to his nephew Albert Wagner on Feb. 9, 1818, "Kotzebue is shewing the cloven hoof again, denouncing and maligning noble thinkers to the Russian court, publishing his sycophantic bulletins, and egging the police against the representatives of Liberty of the Press at Jena, Luden, Oken and Wieland, whose journals he endeavours to suppress by diplomatic trickery. Wretches of his sort know their business; for in the atmosphere of freedom, as men upon too high a mountain, they necessarily must lose their breath. However, it is better that slavery, than that liberty should die; and so it probably will happen, as the axe is everywhere laid at the root."

Until his tardy marriage, Adolf for years had followed his silent calling in a back-room of the Thomä-house (on the Market), sharing a set of apartments with the owner, Jeannette Thomä, and his sister Friederike. This had been one of his reasons for declining Albert's request that he should take charge of the boy Richard: "Most women have to be wound and set, like clocks; a process not quite so degrading to them as it might sound, and which would not be so requisite with another sort of bringing up, than that of our present century; but *rebus stantibus* so it is, and even suits the good ones, provided they are good at heart." The Bayreuth master never forgot the occasional glimpses he had gained of this strange surrounding of his uncle's: Aunt

Friederike was tall and thin, Jeannette Thomä florid and stout, and the two were eternally nagging on one subject after another; "The piano must be tuned," says one, drawing from the other the snappy retort, "That's as much as to say that *I* must get it tuned," and so on. Poor Adolf himself once writes of a "tumult of wild women not to be quelled even by the love of a S. John, which I do not precisely feel." It need therefore be no surprise to us, however great to the two dear ladies, that he got himself married at the age of fifty (in S. Thomas' church, Oct. 18, 1824) to Sophie, thirty-two-year sister of his comrade Wendt. It seems that he had been 'keeping company' with this beautiful and intellectual woman for several years, much to the jealousy and alarm of his sister and Jeannette. Angry expostulations at last were raised by the ladies at home, and for a time the danger seemed overpast; but the sly old fox had not changed his mind. One fine afternoon Herr Adolf sneaks out in his company clothes, and returns two hours later with a bride on his arm (as recounted by Richard Wagner at Bayreuth to Alexander Ritter, of *Faule Hans* renown). Nevertheless, as evidenced by one of his admirable letters to Albert, the middle-aged bridegroom did not forget his old companions, and visits to the Thomä House soon became regular and frequent institutions.

Page 110. LEIPZIG "FAUST" PERFORMANCES and their effect on young Richard.—The *Faust*-overture of 1839-40 was preceded in 1832 by seven settings for Goethe's drama (see J. van Santen-Kolff's article in the *Bayreuther Taschenbuch* 1894). The note-book containing them now reposes in the family-archives at Wahnfried, and bears the following title:

SIEBEN KOMPOSITIONEN
zu Goethe's "Faust,"
von RICHARD WAGNER.
Opus 5.
Leipzig, 1832.

The single pieces are as under:—

(1) *Soldiers' Chorus*, "Burgen mit hohen Zinnen." March measure B major $\frac{2}{4}$.
(2) *Rustics under the Linden*, "Der Schäfer putzte sich zum Tanz." Fast and lively, F major $\frac{2}{4}$. For tenor solo, soprano solo, and chorus.
(3) *Brander's Song*, "Es war eine Ratt' im Kellernest." D major $\frac{2}{4}$.
(4) *Song of Mephistopheles*, "Es war einmal ein König." With affectation of pathos, G major $\frac{2}{4}$.
(5) *Song of Mephistopheles*, "Was machst du mir vor Liebchen's Thür." Moderately fast, E minor $\frac{2}{4}$.
(6) *Song of Gretchen*, "Meine Ruh' ist hin." With passion, but not too quick; G minor $\frac{2}{4}$.
(7) *Melodrama for Gretchen*, "Ach neige, du Schmerzensreiche." Not fast, but very agitated, G minor $\frac{4}{4}$.

It is a little surprising to find all these pieces written in the same measure,

and the two for "Gretchen" also in the selfsame key. Moreover, an opus-number is a rare event with Wagner. Op. 1 and 2 are beyond all doubt (see page 125 of this volume); op. 3 may possibly be represented by the Fantasia in F sharp minor, and op. 4 by the Concert-overture in D minor; which would range these *Seven Compositions* between the D minor and the C major overtures, i.e. at quite the beginning of 1832. On the other hand, we hear of manuscript compositions that preceded "Opus 1"; so that we have nothing certain to rely upon, beyond the date of the title-page as given above. Considering the neatness of their caligraphy, this negligence in "opus-ing" his musical works in itself suggests the future dramatist: we never hear of an opus-number for an *Agamemnon* or *Othello*.

As to the destination of these *Seven Compositions*, it would appear that they were really intended for the *Faust* performances at Leipzig, where sister Rosalie's "Gretchen" had so lasting a success; but the young author himself was too intent on his orchestral progress to trouble his head much about them. Years afterwards we find them mentioned in a letter from London to Fischer dated March 2, 1855, when the master begs for the despatch of a parcel of music left at Dresden under insufficient care. In the list of this music figure "Sieben Kompositionen zu Goethe's Faust," also "Les adieux de Maria Stuart"—the French title of which points to its composition about the same period as the next work on the list, "Les deux Grenadiers," i.e. 1839-40.

Page 121. THE CORPS SAXONIA.—It would have occupied too much space in the body of our narrative, to dwell upon that gay, uproarious student-life whose novelty took Richard Wagner's fancy when just turned seventeen. To the special courtesy of a former archive-keeper of the Saxonia (subsequently Dr G. S., barrister at the Upper District Court in Dresden) we owe some interesting particulars of the constitution of the corps, also confirmation of the old Saxonia tradition that Wagner once belonged to it. His *name*, however, does not appear in the archives, for the good and sufficient reason that none but names of "Corpsburschen in the stricter sense" were ever registered. To explain this to the uninitiated, it will be necessary to describe the composition of a "Corps" at German universities. The Corps consists of an inner and an outer circle, the inner circle being formed by what are called the *Corpsburschen* (the slang "pal" would be about the best equivalent for "Bursch" in this sense). To be received into the actual Corps, or inner circle, the young student must first have served a time of preparation—a kind of mellowing—during which he is called a "Renonce." Upon admission to the inner Corps every Renonce becomes at first an "active Corpsbursch": as such, it is his duty to take part in all the meetings of the Corps, whether for business or pleasure, to fight when so commanded, etc., etc. If the Corpsbursch passes to a higher grade in the university, he is at liberty to become "inactive," i.e. to abstain from any regular share in the doings of the Corps. Wagner did not remain at the university long enough to pass through his novitiate, and therefore never passed beyond the stages of a "crasser Fuchs" (? "fag") and a "Renonce."

The colours of the Corps Saxonia were dark-blue and white for the Renoncen; dark-blue, light-blue and white for full members. Its house of call about this

period was the Green Linden on the Petersteinweg, outside the city; here it spent its carousal-evenings ("Kneipabende") every Wednesday and Saturday, occasionally enlivened by a fight, as on March 11, 1831, when a duel with sabres took place between the Halle-"Saxon" Ollenroth and the "Lusatian" Degelow; but its regular locality for fencing-bouts was Fischer's restaurant on the Burgstrasse. At the beginning of 1831 the Saxonia consisted of 17 Corpsburschen and a larger number of Renoncen. The Senior of the corps, down to the end of the summer term, was Adolf von Schönfeldt, born 1809 at Pösfeld (in the province of Sachsen); he died Jan. 3, 1886, a Prussian Landsrath at Löbnitz by Bitterfeld. The other "active" Corpsburschen were:—Karl Alwill, Count of Solms-Tecklenburg, from Schloss Sachsenfeld (died 1876 at Dresden); Alexander von Seebach, from Hildburghausen, subsequently a Saxon Kammerherr (died 1861 at Gross-Fahnern by Gotha); Bernhard v. Bismarck-Schönhausen, brother of the great statesman and Chancellor, (died a Prussian Privy-Councillor, or Geh. Regierungsrath, May 1893); Hermann Müller of Schwarzenburg (down to the beginning of the seventies a magistrate in Dresden); Karl Maximilian Ehregott Edler v. Planitz, from Auerbach; Heinrich Adolf v. Leipziger, of Naumburg; v. Meyer zu Knonow, a redoubtable fighter; Nake, v. Manteuffel, Meixner, Weinhold, and others. Singularly enough, Wagner's bitterest and most influential enemy of later years, eventually Prime Minister of Saxony, Karl Louis VON BEUST, was also an "active" member. Among the "inactive" were Karl Emil Marschall v. Bieberstein, of Weissenfels, who died a retired Belgian lieutenant and frontier-inspector in 1858 (?) at Wahrsdorf by Schandau; von Globig, and others.

Of combats with "New-Prussian" and "Lusatian" braves, with "Märkern," "Burschenschaftern," "Markomannen," "Hallische Thüringern" and so on, we find no less than 55 from January 3 to August 26, 1831, in which the most distinguished champion was "our Senior v. Schönfeldt," to whom fell more than a seventh portion of the carefully recorded duels. Next to him comes v. Meyer zu Knonow—March 5, twelve rounds "without hat or stock" with the Lusatian Damm, when the latter got the worst of it with five gashes on the face—, then Nake, Weinhold, Meixner, Solms, and so forth. Most frequent among the enemy are the Lusatians Degelow, Stölzer, Tischer, Henschel (whose mighty stature is particularly mentioned), and the New-Prussians Gebhard, Schindler, Kölz etc. Less formidable opponents were also met at times, as in the duel of March 1: "At Fischer's restaurant to-day our Renonce Amthor fought 'Finch' Lippert [a *Finke* is a student unattached to any corps]. Lippert was hit in all 12 rounds, but only twice with bloodshed. It was fine fun to see him dancing round the room, out of the way of Amthor's thrusts." Another time one of the Lusatian warriors, "though he kept pretty close to the wind, was served by v. Bismarck on the forehead after twice having blood drawn from the arm," and so on, and so on. As to special festivities, we find mention of only two during this period in the Saxonia archives: a *Fuchscommers* held June 9 at Kleinzschocher, preceded by "a solemn procession on wheels"; and the anniversary feast on Sept. 4, celebrated in conjunction with the Renoncen by a midday banquet at Klassig's coffee-house,—the grand "general assembly of Landsmannschaften" to celebrate

the laying of the foundation-stone of the new University-buildings, Dec. 4, was certainly not attended by Wagner, who had already ceased to be a student.

Page 199. ADOLF WAGNER'S DEATH.—To complete the history of this worthy, who had so much in common with his famous nephew, it remains to give a brief account of his last few years of life. Quiet and retired, he was occupied as ever with his literary work, but glad to see his nearer friends from time to time. In one of his striking private letters we read, "The whole world, from the stark and lifeless rock to the deepest vein of mind, is a reconciliation-institute"; and again, "The older one grows, the more one economises men and relations." Thus it was a genuine pleasure to renew his intercourse with the Thomä household, once almost dropped, and "to save one kindly human relation the more." He disliked large parties, but "the few friends and acquaintances I see, are pleased to come to me, and I am delighted that three parts of these innocent amusements should fall to the honour of my house. I am no stranger to events in the world and city; I go to the theatre fairly often, though it cannot content me, so that I prefer reading a good play aloud to my friends; which, I observe, is pleasanter alike for them and for myself."—Among his larger undertakings of this period we find a translation entitled "Luigi LANZI's Geschichte der Malerei in Italien, vom Wiederaufleben der Kunst bis Ende des 18 Jahrhunderts" (3 vols., Leipzig 1830-3), with notes by J. G. v. Quandt; also his invaluable, and the first 'collected,' edition of the original Italian writings of GIORDANO BRUNO, which had become extremely rare. As to the importance of the enterprise last-named we have the testimony of George Henry Lewes, who remarks in his *Life of Goethe* (3rd. ed., 1875) "The works have been made accessible through the cheap and excellent edition collected by A. WAGNER: *Opere di Giordano Bruno.* 2 vols. Leipzic: 1830. But I do not observe that, now they are accessible, many persons interest themselves enough in BRUNO to read them."

His bodily strength now commencing to fail, with the advent of maladies brought on by the sedentariness of his occupation, Adolf resumed his favourite exercise of old, long walks, which he did not abandon until a year or so before his death. "For a year and a half, or more, I suffered from excruciating headaches; neither the allopathic nor the homœopathic doctors, for all their promises, helped me in the slightest. Spring came; I tore myself from my work, said goodbye to thinking, and trudged for several miles a day,—and still am doing it in November, whenever the weather is not wet or foggy." *Death* he regarded with increasing composure: "There is an art of arts, that hospitably takes up all the rest into itself, purges, clarifies and hallows them; it is the art of a blessed life, the art of receiving and dispensing the peace of God, or furthering the Kingdom of Heaven in oneself and others"; and again, "What does not lie within the liberty or power of man to gain the seed of, by this art he seeks to fructify as much of it as has been shed on him, so that it may become his very *own*; for all life is a reaction between shall and will, two opposites from whose friction results a neutral tertium quid. These things and their like the pious, and perhaps the easy-going, call divine: for my part I'm content to call and rate them *human*, without disputing the divineness of their origin; *ideas*, or, as the profoundly human ancients called

them, *Gods suffering in Time* . . . As storms are indispensable for many of Nature's processes, so on everyone is laid no more than he needs and can bear; only let us have ears to hear, and if in such cases redeeming love both human and divine encompasses us, let us bring it to birth in ourselves as well! . . . However we may pose and strut, life means to sacrifice. The final sacrifice we have to bring is that of the five senses, as it were the viaticum or toll-fare on the road to Paradise. . . . We are all of us *pauvres honteux*, who go begging for our death-penny. If we have garnered love enough, we go quietly to whence we came, and the earth distils new flowers and spring-times from us, heaven sublimates us to new palms."

In Adolf's very last year of life, besides lesser works, we have his English edition of Burns, "BURNS, Robert, Complete Works, with selected notes of Allan Cunningham, a bibliographical and critical introduction, and a comparative etymologic glossary to the Poet. By ADOLF WAGNER" (*Leipsig*, Fr. Fleischer, 1835). He also had the good fortune to recover an excellent oil-portrait of himself in younger days, which had somehow found its way to Breslau, or been left behind by him long since: "I had been uneasy at the thought of figuring at some marine-store dealer's." This is the portrait referred to in R. Wagner's *Letters to Wesendonck* (Jan. 5, 1870), and afterwards promoted to a place of honour in the Wahnfried library (a second portrait, drawn in profile, shewing the features of maturer age, is faithfully preserved by Siegfried Wagner).—His last summer (when Richard was Musikdirektor at Magdeburg) was spent by Adolf Wagner on the estate of his friend Graf Hohenthal. Here he peacefully departed this life, in which he had worked and struggled enough, "making place for the unaging young."

Page 276. HEINE, MEYERBEER AND WAGNER.—It is quite possible that in conversation with Laube and Heine at this period Richard Wagner may have defended his equivocal "patron" against their sallies, and that in perfectly good faith,—see his preface to *Opera and Drama* (1851), where he speaks of having "once been so mistaken" with regard to Meyerbeer's personality. At the end of the nineteenth century it is a little difficult to realise the position occupied by the composer of the *Huguenots* in its middle third; the semblance of notice and protection he had bestowed on Wagner would naturally be flattering to the young man's amour propre, and dispose him at least to give the almighty one the 'benefit of the doubt.' Even from an æsthetic point of view, down to the composition of *Rienzi* Wagner's path had rather been approaching that of Meyerbeer, at all events in appearance, than receding from it as with the last-named opera's successor, the *Flying Dutchman*. It therefore is with full sincerity that he wrote the penultimate paragraph of his article *On German Music* for the Gazette Musicale (July 1840): "It is more possible for the German, than for anyone else on foreign soil, to bring a national artistic epoch to its highest pitch and universal acceptation. Handel & Gluck have proved it to the full, and in our days another German, Meyerbeer, offers us a fresh example," etc., etc. (*Prose Works*, VII. 101). Oddly enough, this passage—a considerable part of which is omitted from the reproduction in the *Gesammelte Schriften*—has been dragged from its context and triumphantly published in more than one

unfriendly journal, together with other fragments that do not appear even in the Gazette Musicale, and whose destination can only be remotely guessed at. Possibly they were intended for a second article, more especially devoted to Meyerbeer's operas; possibly, on the other hand, they formed a continuation of the original manuscript of the above, and were omitted by the French editor on account of excessive length: in any case they were *never published* with the author's sanction, and we cannot attach to them the weight of 'second thoughts.' Disconnected as they are, the reader may be interested to compare these fragments with Wagner's later utterances concerning Meyerbeer, and we therefore give their leading features:—After discussing the construction of the *Huguenots*, in which "the deliberation, nay, *cold-bloodedness* in the planning and arrangement of the gigantic, almost oppressive extension of forms" is noted as "Meyerbeer's principal characteristic," Wagner deals with the conjuration-scene of the fourth act as follows: "It is impossible to conceive of anything higher in this direction; we feel that the culminating-point, in its strictest sense, has here been reached; and just as the greatest genius would fall to powder if it attempted not merely to *outvie Beethoven's Last Symphony*, but to go *still farther in the same direction*, so it seems impossible to try for any further progress in the direction led by Meyerbeer to its utmost limit. . . We must abide by the opinion that this latest epoch of Dramatic Music has *closed* with Meyerbeer; that after him, just as after Handel, Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, the ideal for that particular period must be set down as attained, no more to be surpassed,—but that Time with its tireless creativity must needs bring forth *a new direction*, in which as great things shall be done again as by those heroes." It will be seen that the difference between this view of 1840-1 and that expressed in *Opera and Drama* is largely one of perspective, since Wagner needed distance yet to recognise that Meyerbeer's music could never be truly regarded as the "ideal" of *any* period in *art*.

Turning to another aspect of these extracts, it is characteristic of Richard Wagner not merely in 1840, but for at least the twenty years surrounding that date, that he looked for "new departures" to issue from the "spirit of the age"; he had not yet discovered that the spirit informing him was *his own*, and foreign to the scribes and artists of his generation. It is a remarkable proof of the innate modesty of genius, that during the whole first half of his life he should have classed himself with Schumann, Hiller, Laube et al., as compeer and colleague belonging to "the age and its forms"; which will explain his constantly deploring the unproductiveness of these his putative equals as something strangely unaccountable. So late as the end of 1851 we find a footnote to Part III. of *Opera and Drama* in which he says that the realisement of the Perfect Drama "depends on conditions which do not lie within the will, or even the power of the Unit, but only in Community and in a mutual co-operation made possible thereby," yet bewails the fact that his own dramatic works are the only ones he can cite as illustrations of that "new direction" he is striving after.

A third point in this connection is the somewhat startling circumstance that Wagner speaks of Meyerbeer as "a German": he had not yet arrived at full perception of the fundamental difference caused by *race*. In fact he classes

Mendelssohn and Heinrich Heine, too, in the "German" category (*P. W.* VIII. 147 and 189), and goes out of his way to defend the latter from the attacks of his "compatriots" anent a certain horse-whipping. The strangest thing of all, however—or shall we say, the most characteristic?—is that, while Wagner was saying a good word for each of these Hebrews, they themselves were engaged in a triangular duel, most virulently waged by Heine. In a report from Paris dated April 20, 1841, Heine mingles sarcasm with his ostensible praise of Meyerbeer's music (*Heine's Werke* XI., "Französische Zustände," pp. 340-1); in a private letter of 1854 he shews his real hand, "It is of the utmost need to me, not to withhold my Meyerbeeriana from the world, not to die like a muzzled dog. For dying men there are no terrors in the means at command of the great General Intendant of Music." Nevertheless he did not *write* his souvenirs of Meyerbeer, but whispered them into the ear; probably for similar reasons of consanguinity to those expressed in a letter of Feb. 11, 1846, to Ferdinand Lassalle: "With regard to Mendelssohn, I readily comply with your wish; not a syllable more shall be printed to his detriment, though I have a grudge against him for his mask of Christianity," and so on. O these children of Judah!

Page 317. PROJECTED LIFE OF BEETHOVEN.—The scheme of this work is detailed the most fully in Wagner's letter of May 7, 1841, to Theodor Hell (Hofrath Winkler): "In his many years of erudite research into musical history Herr Anders, librarian of this place, has devoted special zeal to collecting the most exhaustive information about his Bonn compatriot, great Beethoven. This collection, which embraces many hitherto entirely-unknown data as to the master's *family-history and youth*, had already attained such proportions that Herr Anders was seriously thinking of carrying out his purpose of writing a grand comprehensive Life of Beethoven, when Schindler's recent book appeared. Not only has Herr Anders found that book quite poverty-stricken in comparison with the riches of his own collection, but every thoughtful reader has concurred in his opinion that it is very far from meeting the expectations entertained of a true biography. Moreover, apart from the clumsy patchwork of its composition, that book does not present the remotest approach to a lucid survey of the tone-poet's real artistic life, and its author mostly contents himself with a confused account of what he fancies he has perceived from his own cramped standpoint. Upon this all public voices are agreed, even those which greeted that book's appearance with loud acclaim,—that it really offers nothing but material. Nevertheless, the curiosity aroused by Schindler's work proves how great an interest a genuine and complete life-history would meet in the entire German public; accordingly Herr Anders feels that the time has come at last for executing his long-cherished plan. Since, however, the extraordinarily engrossing nature of his appointment here leaves him hardly any time to spare, and on the other hand, as he admits, an easy, fluent style of composition is no light matter to him, he has proposed to me to place his ample stores at my disposal, discuss the whole thing with me, but leave to me the writing of the book itself. As Beethoven has been my study from of old, and as I believe myself not void of power to speak becomingly on so inspiring a theme, I have accepted the proposal, and now communicate our conjoint plan:—Our biography of Beethoven is to be a book in *two volumes*,

each of thirty sheets of medium-sized type, and will give an exact and circumstantial history of the artistic and social life of the great master in readable, perhaps when occasion suggests, imaginative language. While avoiding all pedantic parade of learned quotations, our book is rather to resemble a grand artist's-romance than a barren recital of chronologically-ordered dates and anecdotes; this notwithstanding, it shall contain nothing that will not bear the test of the minutest and most conscientious historical criticism. At the same time, and interwoven with the historic matter, our book is to furnish *a comprehensive appreciation of the great musical epoch that was made by Beethoven, and from his works has spread to all more recent music.* This biography shall also be supplemented, among other things, by a complete list of Beethoven's compositions, chronologically arranged—as nowhere furnished hitherto—also by facsimiles etc.—In brief, it is to be the amplest and completest work that it is conceivably possible to produce about Beethoven.

"Now, if Herr Arnold, whom we here have pre-eminently in view, should be moved by your most kind conveyance of these details to him to undertake the publication of the book sketched out, he could rely upon having the entire manuscript in course of this current year. To make short work of the business aspect—not an unimportant point, considering the distance—Herr Anders deems needful to state at once the conditions that ought to be settled for so large a work. The fee should be fixed at one-thousand thalers [£150]; further, as Herr Anders' time will be severely taxed by the arrangement of his material, which naturally is scattered through a hundred volumes and moreover will have to be supplemented by the procuring of this or the other book, he would require the payment of a fourth part of the fee in advance, though he is prepared to wait for it, if so desired, until the furnishing of a circumstantial plan. Beyond this, the publisher must consent to despatch to Herr Anders a complete set of the Leipziger Musikalische Zeitung; which would probably not cost so very much, if done through the intermediary of the Avenarius book-firm."

Page 325. SALE OF THE "FLYING DUTCHMAN" DRAFT TO THE GRAND OPÉRA.—A whole string of ridiculous fables has been fastened to the twin-birth of that ill-matched pair, the *Fliegender Holländer* and the *Vaisseau fantôme.* In the first place we have the piquant tale of Léon Pillet taking 5 Napoleons d'or out of his waistcoat-pocket and handing them to Wagner for his sketch, as told by E. Pasqué in *Nord und Süd* (1884) on the authority of a French journalist and playwright, H. Revoil, who claims to have been eye-witness of the transaction—though Liszt in his *Ges. Schr.* (III², p. 234) and Richard Pohl in his *Richard Wagner* (p. 144) give the correct and very different sum of five-hundred francs. Then we have the preposterous romance by Catulle Mendez, that Wagner actually sold his dog for sake of attending a performance of the *Vaisseau fantôme.* Unfortunately for the inventor of this piece of folly, the first performance of the *Vaisseau* did not take place till Nov. 9, 1842, when Wagner had other fish to fry, for he was attending *to* the performances of his *Riensi* at Dresden. Why on earth should he bother his head about a Paris perversion of the *Flying Dutchman*, when he was so soon to produce his own *Holländer* in Germany? And to sell his dog for it, to boot! Don't we remember how he makes his German

Musician in Paris reply to the Englishman, "Not for the whole of Britain would I sell my friend"?—But it is needless to go farther into these cock-and-bull stories, the above specimens being fairly representative of the marvellous legends that still find credence with the unreasoning and ill-informed.

Page 332. MEYERBEER AND THE "DUTCHMAN'S" ACCEPTANCE AT BERLIN.—Wagner has so often been charged with ingratitude to Meyerbeer by those who obstinately shut their eyes to the tortuous policy of the Hebrew composer, that it is necessary again and again to accentuate the fact that he had absolutely *nothing* to be grateful for. Meyerbeer's Parisian recommendations had been deliberately given in quarters where he knew they would have no result. As for *Rienzi*, it was almost by force that his letter to von Lüttichau was extorted from him; and surely, had he meant to do Wagner a kindness, we should have expected to hear of some *congratulation* on the Dresden success. The absence of any such mark of approval speaks volumes in itself. Then we come to Berlin and the official "acceptance" of the *Dutchman* which he threw to Wagner as a bone to a worrying dog. Nothing came of it for two or three years, in the very city where Meyerbeer was supreme at the Opera. Why? Perhaps Heinrich Laube's cognate experience may throw some light upon the shady question.

Laube had written a play called "Struensee," and the Intendanz had accepted it, adding the corollary that preparations were already on foot for its production. After months of waiting for further news, Laube inquired the cause of the delay; then, as he himself records, "I learnt that the title 'Struensee' had roused the dead. Meyerbeer's brother, Michael Beer, had also written a drama *Struensee*; it had now been dragged from oblivion, provided with music by the bigger brother, and pressingly recommended for production. Pressingly, did I say? *Most* pressingly, and that from many hundred sides. Meyerbeer, almighty in Berlin, took pains to prove that his music was not merely incidental, but grand-opera music, with which my poor unmusical piece could not compare. It was to no purpose, that my piece had won a great success on many stages, whilst Michael Beer's had not; to no purpose that Küstner, the Intendant, was for *my* piece, that he had accepted it before, that influential persons backed him up;—everything was in vain, for Meyerbeer deployed a *force majeure* that even the Court-theatre Intendant could not resist. So it came to pass: Beer's piece was performed, and the journals flowed over with praise. I had to resign myself, and simply begged that my piece might *also* be given thereafter. But even that was met by untold difficulties, albeit the Intendant, several people in the entourage of the King, and finally the King himself, all wanted it. It transpired that the principal actor had been won over for Beer's, and shrugged his shoulders at the mere idea of learning another 'Struensee.' Küstner was beside himself at the subterranean force that struck him powerless. Only after a long, long battle, did I conquer that actor; my piece was given, and had the most encouraging success. After a few representations, however, that actor *fell ill*, and did not recover until administered the opportunity of playing in Beer's 'Struensee' again" (Heinrich Laube's *Erinnerungen* 1810-1840, pp. 388-9).

A case like this affords a miniature of what Richard Wagner had to suffer on the grand scale with all his works in Berlin. When the *Dutchman* at last appeared there, although it reaped a fair success, it very soon vanished from the repertory. *Rienzi* itself was never given till 1847; the newspaper critics had done everything in their power to undermine its chances, and Meyerbeer had scuttled out of town. Undeniable successes of Wagner's works were either *ignored* in French and German papers, or else the author's name was made unrecognisable and that of Meyerbeer rubbed in—even in journals such as Schlesinger's *Gazette*, or the Stuttgart *Europa*, which had previously been friendly. A Dresden correspondent sends this notice to the *Journal des Débats* of October 1845: "Au Théâtre Royal de notre capitale on travaille activement à la mise en scène d'un opéra en cinq actes [*sic*], ayant pour titre 'Tannhäuser' et donc la musique est de Mr. Robert [*sic*] Wagner, élève de *l'illustre Meyerbeer*,"—as Georges Noufflard well remarks, "Sans doute un ami de Wagner eût su qu'il ne s'appelait pas *Robert* et que 'Tannhäuser' n'a que *trois* actes. On est donc conduit à attribuer l'insertion de ces correspondances au désir qu'avait *Meyerbeer* de faire croire qu'il faisait école en Allemagne." A further contribution supplements the Meyerbeerian puff as follows: "La nouvelle œuvre de M. Wagener [*sic*] a été accueillie par notre public avec le plus grand enthousiasme. L'auteur a été appelé sur la scène après chaque acte, et lorsque le spectacle a été fini, tous les membres de l'orchestre et plus de deux cents jeunes gens se sont rendus processionellement, chacun muni d'un flambeau, à la maison où demeure M. Wagener et ils ont exécuté sous les croisées de ce jeune compositeur une sérénade composée de morceaux choisis dans ses ouvrages et dans ceux de M. Meyerbeer." The fable of a torch-light procession to the strains of this grotesque medley of music is just as obviously traceable to the tactics of Meyerbeer's international bureau, as is the constant falsification of Wagner's name and connection with the "illustre Meyerbeer." At the same time the *Europa* (A. Lewald's journal) serves up to its readers the exquisite hash, "We hear from Paris that Wagner's new opera, Tannheuser [*sic*], was received with general approbation at Dresden on the 23rd of October. The composer is one of Meyerbeer's favourite pupils, and intends, like his master, to write for the French Opera." This is merely a precursor of the plan adopted by the leading musical journal of Berlin in 1850, when each weekly number was systematically strewn with paragraphs touching the great maëstro's *Prophète*, but in the whole year (that of *Lohengrin's* production at Weimar) *Lohengrin* is mentioned only five times, according to Tappert's minute examination, and that quite briefly; twice with the unintelligible titles, *Longris* and *Longnin*; once without a word to indicate the composer; then, to chronicle a gift-of-honour received by Liszt after the representation; and lastly with a false assertion of the novelty's scant success. When it became impossible to keep the poet-composer any longer in the shade by disfiguring his name and calling him an *élève de Meyerbeer*, the strategy was silence and suppression. The word was given by the "maëstro" himself, the man who would have let his "favourite pupil" starve in Paris for all he cared. He quaked at the idea of Wagner, and endeavoured to persuade himself and others that no such person existed. His passionate adorer, the departed Blaze de Bury, tells us how the very *name* turned him

pale: "he could never hear it spoken without betraying an unpleasant sensation; an involuntary twitching of the face, or a hasty interjection, would reveal to one the true state of his feeling." In 1853 the Russian composer Alexander Szeroff was at Baden-Baden with Meyerbeer; *Lohengrin* was to be performed at Wiesbaden; Szeroff announced his intention of going to hear it. "N'y allez pas!" said Meyerbeer hurriedly, "Ce serait du temps perdu." But Szeroff went, all the same, and discovered that the illustrious one had more reason to be concerned for his own laurels than for others' time.

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N.B. In German names K and C are often interchangeable.

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